

DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 18 - ZONING

18.03.050 - Environmental definitions.

In addition to the definitions found in Title 16, the following definitions shall also apply to this title:

"Adverse environmental impact" means an impact caused by vegetation removal which creates a risk of landslide or erosion, or which alters or damages wetlands, wetland buffers, wildlife habitat, streams, or watercourses.

"Alteration of watercourse" Any action that will change the location of the channel occupied by water within the banks of any portion of a riverine waterbody.

"Area of shallow flooding" A designated zone AO, AH, AR/AO or AR/AH (or VO) on a community's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) with a one percent or greater annual chance of flooding to an average depth of one to three feet where a clearly defined channel does not exist, where the path of flooding is unpredictable, and where velocity flow may be evident. Such flooding is characterized by ponding or sheet flow. Also referred to as the sheet flow area.

"Area of special flood hazard" means the land in the floodplain within a community subject to a 1 percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. It is shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as zone A, AO, AH, A1-30, AE, A99, AR (V, VO, V1-30, VE). "Special flood hazard area" is synonymous in meaning with the phrase "area of special flood hazard".

"Base flood" means the flood having a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (also referred to as the "100-year flood").

"Base Flood Elevation (BFE)" means the elevation to which floodwater is anticipated to rise during the base flood.

"Best available information" means, in the absence of official flood insurance rate map data, communities can use data from other federal, state, or other sources; provided this data has either been generated using technically defensible methods or is based on reasonable historical analysis and experience. Flood data from existing flood events may be used where flood events are considered more accurate indicators of past base flood conditions. Any variance from adopted flood insurance rate maps must be of a more restrictive nature.

"Buffer" means either: (1) an area adjacent to hillsides which provides the margin of safety through protection of slope stability, attenuation of surface water flows, and landslide, seismic, and erosion hazards reasonably, necessary to minimize risk to the public from loss of life, well-being, or property damage resulting from natural disasters; or (2) an area adjacent to a stream or wetland which is an integral part of the stream or wetland ecosystem, providing shade; input of organic debris and coarse sediments; room for variation in stream or wetland boundaries; habitat for wildlife; impeding the volume and rate of runoff; reducing the amount of sediment, nutrients, and toxic materials entering the stream or wetland; and protection from harmful intrusion to protect the public from losses suffered when the functions and values of stream and wetland resources are degraded.

"Critical root zone" is the area of soil around a tree trunk where roots are located that provide stability and uptake of water and minerals required for tree survival.

"Diameter at breast height (DBH)" means the diameter of the tree measured at four feet six inches above soil grade.

"Drainage facility" means the system of collecting and storing surface and stormwater runoff. Drainage facilities shall include but not be limited to all surface and stormwater runoff conveyance and containment facilities including streams, pipelines, channels, ditches, wetlands, closed depressions, infiltration facilities, retention/detention facilities, and other drainage structures and appurtenances, both natural and man-made.

"Environmentally sensitive area(s)" or "sensitive lands" means areas within the city that are characterized by, or support unique, fragile or valuable natural resources, or that are subject to natural

hazards. Sensitive areas include wetlands and wetland buffers, streams and watercourses, steep slopes, and areas with potentially unstable soils, as those areas are defined and identified pursuant to this title and Title 16.

“Flood or Flooding” means

A. A general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas from:

1. The overflow of inland or tidal waters.
2. The unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source.
3. Mudslides (i.e., mudflows) which are proximately caused by flooding as defined in paragraph (1)(b) of this definition and are akin to a river of liquid and flowing mud on the surfaces of normally dry land areas, as when earth is carried by a current of water and deposited along the path of the current.

B. The collapse or subsidence of land along the shore of a lake or other body of water as a result of erosion or undermining caused by waves or currents of water exceeding anticipated cyclical levels or suddenly caused by an unusually high water level in a natural body of water, accompanied by a severe storm, or by an unanticipated force of nature, such as flash flood or an abnormal tidal surge, or by some similarly unusual and unforeseeable event which results in flooding as defined in paragraph (1)(a) of this definition

“Flood elevation study” means an examination, evaluation, and determination of flood hazards and, if appropriate, corresponding water surface elevations, or an examination, evaluation, and determination of mudslide (i.e., mudflow) and/or flood-related erosion hazards. Also known as a Flood Insurance Study (FIS).

“Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)” means the official map of a community, on which the Federal Insurance Administrator has delineated both the special hazard areas and the risk premium zones applicable to the community. A FIRM that has been made available digitally is called a Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM).

“Flood Insurance Study (FIS)” means the official report provided by the Federal Insurance Administration that includes flood profiles, the Flood Insurance Rate Maps, and the water surface elevation of the base flood.

“Floodplain or flood prone area” means any land area susceptible to being inundated by water from any source. See “Flood or flooding.”

“Floodplain administrator” means the community official designated by title to administer and enforce the floodplain management regulations.

“Flood proofing” means any combination of structural and nonstructural additions, changes, or adjustments to structures which reduce or eliminate risk of flood damage to real estate or improved real property, water and sanitary facilities, structures, and their contents. Flood proofed structures are those that have the structural integrity and design to be impervious to floodwater below the Base Flood Elevation.

“Floodway” means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. Also referred to as “Regulatory Floodway.”

“Functionally dependent use” means a use which cannot perform its intended purpose unless it is located or carried out in close proximity to water. The term includes only docking facilities, port facilities that are necessary for the loading and unloading of cargo or passengers, and ship building and ship repair facilities, and does not include long term storage or related manufacturing facilities.

“Hazard tree.” A hazard tree is any tree with a combination of structural defect and/or disease, which makes it subject to a high probability of failure and a proximity to persons or property which makes it an imminent threat.

“Highest adjacent grade” means the highest natural elevation of the ground surface prior to construction next to the proposed walls of a structure.

"Hillsides" means geological features of the landscape having slopes of fifteen percent or greater. To differentiate between levels of hillside protection and the application of development standards, the city categorizes hillsides into four groups: hillsides of at least fifteen percent but less than forty percent; hillsides with unstable slopes; hillsides of forty percent slope and greater; hillsides which are ravine sidewalls or bluffs.

“Historic structure” means any structure that is:

A. Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing on the National Register;

B. Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined by the Secretary to qualify as a registered historic district;

C. Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in states with historic preservation programs which have been approved by the Secretary of Interior; or

D. Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs that have been certified either:

1. By an approved state program as determined by the Secretary of the Interior, or
2. Directly by the Secretary of the Interior in states without approved programs.

“Mean Sea Level” For purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program, the vertical datum to which Base Flood Elevations shown on a community's Flood Insurance Rate Map are referenced.

"Mitigation" means the use of any combination of, or all of the following actions:

1. Avoid impacts to environmentally sensitive areas by not taking a certain action, or parts of an action;
2. Minimize impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, by using appropriate technology, or by taking affirmative steps to avoid or reduce impacts;
3. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environmentally sensitive area;
4. Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by reservation and maintenance operations during the life of the development proposal;
5. Compensating for the impact by replacing or enhancing environmentally sensitive areas, or providing substitute resources.

“New construction” For the purposes of determining insurance rates, structures for which the “start of construction” commenced on or after the effective date of an initial Flood Insurance Rate Map or after December 31, 1974, whichever is later, and includes any subsequent improvements to such structures. For floodplain management purposes, “new construction” means structures for which the "start of construction" commenced on or after the effective date of a floodplain management regulation adopted by a community and includes any subsequent improvements to such structures.

"Open space" means land set aside and maintained in a natural state, providing air, light, and habitat for wildlife, and/or containing significant trees and vegetation. Open space may contain environmentally sensitive lands, which include but are not limited to steep slopes and areas with unstable soils, wetlands, and streams and watercourses. Open space may also provide for active and passive recreation use. There are two general categories of open space, which are as follows:

1. "Natural open space" means land devoted to protecting environmentally sensitive lands as defined in this title and CMC Title 16. Natural open space generally has no developed areas, with

the exception of trails as identified in the comprehensive parks, recreation, open space plan, or by a condition of development approval.

2. "Recreational open space" means land set aside for recreational opportunities, which may contain trails, sports fields, playgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, and picnic areas. Recreational open space is generally limited in size and intensity, proportionate to the development, and is intended for the enjoyment of the residents of the development.

"Open space connectors" means tracts of land with typically no sensitive lands that connect parcels of land to form the open space network.

"Open space network" means a network of open space composed of mostly wooded areas, steep slopes, ravines, streams and waterways, as areas identified in the comprehensive parks, recreation, and open space plan.

"Protective mechanism" means a method of providing permanent protection to open space, and shall include conservation easements, dedication to the city, conveyance to a public or private land trust, conveyance to a homeowner's association, restrictive covenants, or any combination of such mechanisms.

"Ravine sidewall" means a steep slope which abuts and rises from the valley floor of a stream, and which was created by the wearing action of the stream. Ravine sidewalls contain slopes predominantly in excess of forty percent, although portions may be less than forty percent. The toe of a ravine sidewall is the stream valley floor. The top of a ravine sidewall is typically a distinct line where the slope abruptly levels out. Where there is no distinct break in slope, the top is where the slope diminishes to less than fifteen percent. Minor natural or man-made breaks in the slope of ravine sidewalls shall not be considered as the top. Benches with slopes less than fifteen percent, and containing developable areas, shall be considered as the top.

Sensitive Areas. See "Environmentally sensitive areas."

"Sensitive area(s) map(s)" means those maps adopted, and/or incorporated by reference, by the city to identify the general location of environmentally sensitive or valuable areas. In case of questions as to map boundaries or mapping errors, the presence or absence of a sensitive area shall be determined in the field by a qualified professional, experienced in a discipline appropriate to evaluation of the appropriate feature, and shall determine the applicability of this chapter.

"Significant trees" means evergreen trees eight inches DBH, and deciduous trees twelve inches DBH. Does not include hazard trees or invasive species.

"Steep slopes" or "area with potential unstable soils" means any land potentially subject to landslides, severe erosion, or seismic activity (earthquake faults). Steep slopes are generally characterized by slopes of fifteen percent or greater, impermeable subsurface material (sometimes interbedded with permeable subsurface material), and/or springs or seeping groundwater during the wet season. Seismic areas are those lying along or adjacent to identified earthquake faults.

"Stream" or "watercourse" means those areas where surface waters produce a defined channel or bed. The channel or bed need not contain water year-round. This definition does not include irrigation ditches, canals, storm or surface water conveyance devices, or other entirely artificial watercourses. Streams are further categorized as Class 1 through 5 in accordance with the classifications used by WAC 222-16-030.

"Structure" For floodplain management purposes, a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground, as well as a manufactured home.

"Tree protection zone" is an arborist-defined area surrounding the trunk intended to protect roots and soil within the critical root zone and beyond, to ensure future tree health and stability. Tree protection zones may be calculated based on multiplying the tree's DBH by a factor of twelve depending on the tree's species and tolerance of root disturbance.

"Variance" means a grant of relief by a community from the terms of a floodplain management regulation.

"Water dependent" means a use or portion of a use that cannot exist in a location which is not adjacent to the water, and which is dependent on the water by reason of the intrinsic nature of its operations. Examples include, but are not limited to: aquaculture, marinas, or float plane facilities.

"Wetland bond" insures the satisfactory installation, maintenance, and monitoring of wetland creation or enhancement as may be required as part of the SEPA or wetland mitigation plans. The bond has a beginning and ending date, and shall be in the amount as specified in CMC Section 17.21.050(B)(3).

"Wetland buffer" means a naturally vegetated and undisturbed, enhanced or revegetated area surrounding wetland that is part of a wetland ecosystem and protect a wetland from adverse impacts to its function, integrity, and value. Wetland buffers serve to moderate runoff volume and flow rates; reduce sediment, chemical nutrient and toxic pollutants; provide shading to maintain desirable water temperatures; provide habitat for wildlife; and protect wetland resources from human activities.

"Wetlands" means areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland sites, including but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities. However, wetlands include those artificial wetlands intentionally created to mitigate conversions of wetlands.

"Wildlife habitat" means areas that provide food, protective cover, nesting, breeding, or movement for threatened, endangered, sensitive, monitor, or priority species of wildlife, or other wildlife species of special concern. "Wildlife habitat" shall also mean areas that are the location of threatened, endangered, sensitive, monitor, or priority species of plants, or other plant species of special concern.

(Ord. 2515 § 1 (Exh. A (part)), 2008)

(Ord. No. 2612, § I(Exh. A), 2-7-2011; Ord. No. 2648, § I, 5-21-2012; [Ord. No. 2691, § I\(Exh. A\), 1-21-2014](#))