SDCI

Director's Rule 10-2016

Applicant: City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections	**Page** 1 of 2	**Supersedes:**
	Publication: 9/26/2016	**Effective:** 10/17/2016
Subject: Update of Environmentally Critical Areas Mapping	**Code and Section Reference:** SMC 25.09.030.A (Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas)	
	Type of Rule: Map Update	
	Ordinance Authority: SMC 25.09.030A	
Index: Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas	**Approved** **Date** (signature on file) 10/17/2016 Nathan Torgelson	

PURPOSE

This rule updates the advisory map for steep slope Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) as shown on the attached map titled "New 40% Steep Slope Layer," dated August 18, 2016. You can view the updated advisory map for steep slope areas on the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) website, (www.seattle.gov/sdci) shown as a layer in the SDCI geographic information system (GIS).

AUTHORITY

The authority for updating the map is Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 25.09.030.A, *Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas,* which states that "the Director may update or amend the maps by Director's Rule".

BACKGROUND

The existing steep slope area map has been in use since Ordinance 116253 took effect on October 31, 1992. The existing map is based upon aerial topography from about 1954 to 1958, with steep slope areas delineated in the late 1980s to early 1990s for use with Ordinance 116523.

"Steep slope" is a slope with an incline of 40% or more (10 feet of vertical rise over a horizontal distance of 25 feet or less) with a height of at least 10 feet. You can find more information about the definition of steep slope in SMC 25.09.020A, environmentally critical areas definitions.

The steep slope area map is called "advisory" because the mapping is used by SDCI for initial information and screening. Whether or not a site is eventually treated as an environmentally critical area is based on the actual topography of the ground surface.

BASIS FOR UPDATED STEEP SLOPE ECA MAPPING

The updated advisory steep slope critical areas are based upon the 2001 LIDAR (light detection and ranging) contours (Puget Sound LIDAR Consortium) and the 1993 topographic contours from aerial photos. SDCI used both sets of contours to develop the updated map because each type of mapping has strengths and weaknesses. LIDAR is generally better where there is heavy vegetation or tree cover. The 1993 topographic contours may be more accurate in areas where there are retaining walls.

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The portions of the updated advisory map of steep slope areas covering the northern and southern thirds of the City are based on a combination of the 2001 LIDAR and the 1993 topographic contours. Because of time constraints, the portion of the updated map covering the center third of the City is based only on the 2001 LIDAR contours.