



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Policy Commission
FROM: Minnie Dhaliwal, CPD Director
RE: Title 18 Update – Part 6, IMC 18.810 Forested Hillside Preservation
DATE: August 11, 2022

Background

The Council Ad Hoc Committee's Title 18 Update Desired Goals and Outcome document identifies the following priority relevant to this topic:

Goal 1: *Protect forested hillsides.*

Desired Outcome:

- Create Create regulations that protect the visual and ecological character of hillsides especially around trees (retaining or replanting) and wall character.
- Development standards require buildings to respond to topography, limit vertical cuts and fills, specify max. walls heights and placement, address trucking.
- Allow development consistent with the land's character such as TDRs but not maximize development on difficult and challenging properties

Goal 13: *Modernize code and incorporate best practices.*

Desired Outcome:

- Create a well-organized, clear code that improves public access to information; provides tools that address community needs; and helps create the kinds of places the community expects.

The draft code for Forested Hillside Preservation adapts and updates existing regulations in the Municipal Code and the Central Issaquah Urban Design Manual.

The packet includes a summary of substantial changes in Attachment A, that focus on improvements to organization of code, process or implementation of direction from the Administration or the Commission; but are actions that do not warrant discussion with the Commission.

The following Analysis section includes the additional information to help the Commission’s discussion of the policy questions posed for this section of code.

Summary of Changes for IMC 18.810 Forested Hillside Preservation

The following summarizes the substantive changes made to develop the proposed **18.810 Forested Hillside Preservation** chapter and the reasoning behind it. The changes are based on the gaps analysis, previous discussions with the Planning Policy Commission, a Staff evaluation of existing code and feedback from the City attorney’s office.

CHANGE	REASON
1. Intent sections updated with minor revisions for clarity.	Update improves City process and consistency.
2. New applicability standard and exception is new and updated for clarity of this draft code section.	Change part of code consolidation and simplification.
3. Measurement and Mapping section updated for clarity and to coordinate with critical areas code update.	Update improves City process and consistency
4. New “Alternative Compliance Options to Achieve Protection Priorities” section added to provide options for locations that cannot fully comply with proposed regulations.	This update is consistent with allowing flexibility with detailed options that meet the cities regulatory goals for natural preservation.
5. Added 18.810.050, regulations for hillside protections and consistency with updates from draft code sections for critical areas, landscaping, and transportation.	Update to provide guidance or were revised to be more specific in new code.
6. Development Standards updated with peer city research for Street access, building design on hillsides, grading and retaining walls.	Update adapts code with modern best practices that meet the goals and outcomes for the Title 18 project update.

Previous Meetings

- December 9, 2021 – Planning Policy Commission: Procedures and Administration, ([Agenda/Minutes/Video](#))

Timeline

- August 11th, 2022 – Public Hearing: Title 18 – IMC 18.508 Accessory Uses, IMC 18.510 Temporary Uses, IMC 18.512 Wireless Communication Facilities, IMC 18.516 Sustainable Micro-Infrastructure, IMC 18.702 Through Block Passages, IMC 18.800 SEPA Rules, and IMC 18.810 Forested Hillside Preservation.
- November 2022 – Public Hearings: Consolidated Draft Title 18 Update

Attachments

- Summary of Public Comments

B. Summary of Public Comments

Date	Commentor Name	Topic	Comment	Response Notes
12/6/2021	Connie Marsh	Terrain Management	<p>Currently the Critical Area Code allows steep slopes to be reduced to 10-feet with a supporting critical area report. Believes Issaquah has had many problems with reduced buffers, especially areas with water. Would like to know how much should steep slopes buffers be reduced to?</p> <p>Historically, how many steep slope cuts have been for road access? Believes many steep slope cuts have been made for road access. What is State law regarding this matter? Can the City mandate conditions for these situations?</p> <p>How can forested hillsides be protected and make walkable streets? The City's Comprehensive Plan states Issaquah Highlands and Talus should be reforested if naked slopes exist. It seems staff is questing whether these slopes should be reforested. If so, the answer is yes.</p>	This will be addressed with the Terrain Management Chapter