

Appendix II - Comparison of Major Hillside and Non-Hillside Residential Development Policies and Standards

Topic	Non-Hillside Areas	Hillside Residential	Additional Considerations
Relationship to General Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on density and land use compatibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of natural slopes, scenic views, and other environmental resources. 	<p>Site Topography, environmental considerations, hazard sensitivity, viewsheds, intensity of development.</p>
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No unique standards • Standards apply regardless of topography • Focus on density and lot size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards only apply on properties over 25% average slope • Standards more tailored to unique hillside conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Landform ➤ Drainage ➤ Access ➤ Building Design/ Height ➤ Retaining Walls ➤ Landscaping ➤ Hazard Avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of property in a way that substantially addresses natural site character and environmental and aesthetic values
Site Suitability & Buildable Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of parcel typically buildable • Constraints usually limited to setbacks • No topography-based limits on grading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial lot development is common • Remaining undeveloped areas often most constrained 	<p>Topographic constraints and buildable area limitations</p>

Grading

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of grading thresholds that apply citywide• No requirement to consider natural land features.• Impacts typically contained onsite• No practical grading limit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural landform considerations in plan design (minimal contour, and landform grading techniques)• No grading on steep slopes• Maximum slope heights• Minimal Grading• Grading scars tend to be more visible for an extended period. | <p>Landform preservation, slope disturbance limits, grading visibility, lasting visual impact.</p> |
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Retaining Wall Function

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walls are typically accessory and limited in scale• Primarily address minor grade changes on a site | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walls often essential for slope stability• Used to create usable and safe building areas and access• Can be used to reduce grading and/or expand developable areas• Aesthetic considerations due to height and location | <p>Slope stabilization, buildable pad area creation, grading reduction potential, access feasibility</p> |
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Retaining Wall Height & Terracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height generally limited by setbacks • Fewer walls needed • Flexibility for wall heights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple or terraced walls more common up to six feet high • Step-backs used to reduce visual dominance • Crib wall option allows walls higher than six feet 	Potential visual impacts due to vertical scale issues, terracing configuration, step-back spacing
Retaining Wall Design & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard materials typically acceptable such as grey precision block • Limited design sensitivity required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design integration emphasized with grading and structures • Materials, finishes, and textures matter more • Landscaping required to reduce the visual impact of walls 	Material and color compatibility (earthtones) with surrounding terrain, landscape screening
Biological & Resource Avoidance (MSHCP, USFW, CDFG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constraints can be present but often avoidable • Greater flexibility in site layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constraints more prevalent • Avoidance of steep or other undevelopable areas 	General Plan conservation objectives for sloped areas and ridges
Fire Hazard & Life-Safety Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire standards apply citywide • Typical compliance achievable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire risk is elevated • Access and defensible space is more constrained • Fuel modification applies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slope conditions, fuel loading, access and response constraints

Visual Context &
Community
Character

- Limited regional visibility
- Visual effects localized

- Ridgelines and slopes highly visible
- Development alters public-facing viewsheds
- Hillsides are a significant element of community character
- Changes are long-lasting and highly noticeable

Ridgeline prominence, viewshed exposure, aesthetic continuity of hillside areas, long-term visual change.