



Codes and Ordinances Governing Your City

Hillside Living

Building a Home and Improving a Lot in the Hillside Areas (HR-1 Zone) Requires Extra Attention

The city through the general plan process, public meetings, and leadership has placed extra regulations on development in the hillside area to protect the sensitive environment of the area. The hills, ridgelines, and drainages cannot be replaced and gain protection under this code.

Preparing for a Home to be Built

The intent of the HR-1 Zone is to construct with the natural terrain. All structures should be built using the current natural terrain configuration. Some grading can be approved if it is demonstrated that it is needed for safety, erosion control, proper runoff, or that the alternative is less desirable. Dwellings on the down slope side of a road should utilize the natural slope while designing the grade around the structure to drain away from it. Using fill to raise the finished grade around a structure to rise above a road is prohibited.

Re-Vegetation/Retention Plan Required

A re-vegetation/retention plan is required for each lot prior to any removal of vegetation or the issuance of a grading permit. The plan shall illustrate all areas proposed for removal of vegetative materials and retention. Re-vegetation of indigenous hardwood trees and grasses is required for areas of cuts and fills, around retention walls, and areas where previous activities have disturbed natural conditions. Areas requiring retention over 4 feet will require the plan to be approved by a licensed civil engineer. The city engineer and planning commission shall approve the re-vegetation/retention plan. Cut or fill slopes shall be no steeper than two feet horizontal to one foot vertical (2:1) and shall be designed with acceptable erosion control systems. An erosion control system is generally composed of a combination of long-term non-degradable erosion mat, structural geogrid and/or geotextile. The maximum cumulative cut or fill allowed on a lot is 15 feet.

Removal of Natural Vegetation

Natural vegetation including indigenous hardwood trees can be removed from the portions of the lot to be committed to the dwelling, driveway, retention walls, firebreaks and areas required to be cleared as described within the urban interface area requirements of the city code 9-3-9. Once these areas are cleared, 75% or the remaining hardwood trees shall remain on the property. Areas with slopes 20% or greater that are not a part of an approved building envelope, ravines, drainages, and wildlife corridors shall remain in a natural state.

Grading Permit Required

No grading, filling or excavation of any kind shall commence on land within the HR-1 zone without first having obtained a grading permit. A re-vegetation/retention plan, endorsed by a licensed civil engineer, must be approved by the city engineer and planning commission. A grading permit is required for each individual lot prior to a building permit being issued. Areas outside of approved grading areas shall be cordoned off with nylon fencing or equivalent during the grading and construction process and shall not be disturbed.

Are there Special Fencing Rules?

Yes. Fencing requirements will conform to the standards listed in 10-12-13 of the city code. Additionally, to preserve drainage and wildlife corridors, no fence shall be constructed on ravines, drainages, open space areas, and slopes of 20% or greater.

So What Are All The Rules?

You can view the complete city code at the city office or go to the city website at www.elkridgecity.org look under Quick Links and City Code:

City Code 10-09A Hillside Residential-1 Zone
City Code 10-11C Hillside Cluster Overlay Zone
City Code 10-12-13 Fencing
City Code 9-3-9 Urban Interface Area
General Plan – Sensitive Areas Map