

REAL ESTATE



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Q | Many of the remaining undeveloped properties in the City of Seattle contain environmentally critical areas that restrict development options. I understand the City has been considering changes to its critical areas regulations. Have the new regulations been adopted and are the changes significant?

A | Yes, the City Council adopted new regulations in February. Critical areas include steep slopes, wetlands, streams, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. State law requires cities to adopt and periodically update regulations to protect these areas in accordance with “best available science.” Critical area regulations supplement zoning standards. In most cases, development is prohibited or strictly limited in these areas and their buffers, even if otherwise allowed by zoning regulations. The new rules contain some significant changes compared to those previously in effect, and should be reviewed carefully when planning a new development project.