

Code Enforcement Corner

Sandy City adopted the first Sensitive Area Overlay Zone (SAOZ) that deals with hillsides, native vegetation, waterways, and geological hazards in 1978. The purpose of this ordinance was to address development standards for the properties that have sensitive areas. Some examples of the protected areas include properties that have 30 percent or greater slopes, earthquake fault lines, and rock fall hazards. These regulations provide standards, guidelines, and criteria to minimize flooding, erosion, and other environmental hazards.

There are a number of properties within Sandy City that fall within the SAOZ. More recent subdivision plats (post-1990) identify where these sensitive areas are on the lots and information about the restrictions. However, many property owners may not realize there are restrictions on what they can or cannot do to these areas. Over the years, some property owners have modified these protected areas for a variety of reasons without getting any sort of approval. Some of those reasons include wanting a bigger/flat rear yard or installing a pool or accessory structure.

Violations that occur within the SAOZ are a serious matter that can have negative impacts on the public health, safety and welfare, the environment and property values. Consequently, it is in the interest of the city and its residents to ensure the standards of the SAOZ are applied consistently and violations of those standards are avoided.

In October 2023 the city amended the SAOZ by establishing an administrative procedure and penalties for enforcement on violations. The effect of the code amendment was the creation of an efficient administrative enforcement mechanism to deter violations from occurring and establishing incentives to promptly cure the violation. Prior to this code amendment, enforcement penalties were applied through civil or criminal courts and were punishable by a Class C misdemeanor. This process can be costly and time consuming for the city with uncertain and sometime ineffective outcomes.



The following is a summary of the recent changes to the SAOZ:

1. A new Section to Chapter 21-15 of the Sensitive Area Overlay Zone is added as Section 7 and titled: "Violations, Enforcement and Penalties."
2. A violation is defined as construction, grading, filling, clearing or land disturbance in the SAOZ without first obtaining appropriate (permit) approval from the City.
3. A procedure for issuing citations, enforcement, and remediation of violations in the SAOZ is established.
4. A penalty fine schedule for minor, intermediate and major violations, as well as a base fine and daily fine amount is established, as shown below:

	BASE FINE	DAILY FINE (add to base fine)
Minor Violation – Encroachment less than 250 square feet of affected area	\$1,000	\$10
Intermediate Violation – Encroachment between 250 square feet and 1,000 square feet of affected area	\$3,000	\$18
Major Violation – Encroachment greater than 1,000 square feet of affected area	\$5,000	\$25

5. Incentives for curing a violation in a timely manner is established. The base fine amount may not be reduced, but the daily fine amount may be reduced, as shown below:

	Length of Time to Cure	Reduction to Total Daily Fine Amount
Minor and Intermediate Violations	30 Days	100%
	60 Days	75%
	120 Days	50%
	180 Days	25%
	Over 180 days	0%
Major Violation 90 Days	90 Days	75%
	180 Days	50%
	365 Days	25%
	Over 365 Days	0%

We plead with residents to talk with the Community Development Department, Planning Division, to find out if your property is within the SAOZ and what the possible restrictions are prior to making any adjustments to your property. You can read about the SAOZ at bit.ly/SAOZone. Sandy City has created a website that identifies what geological hazards are found within the city boundaries. You can see that website at bit.ly/UtahHazardsMap. If you have any questions, please call the Community Development Department at (801) 568-7256.

Sandy City General Plan

The Pace of Progress team was hard at work over the summer generating significant community and stakeholder input on Sandy values and key strategies. We are continuing to identify and refine the General Plan Vision and Values, identify key strategies for the future, and generate the direction, goals, and policy direction of each of the General Plan chapters.

This is where you come in. On the project website we have included the draft values that have emerged throughout the process. You can visit the Idea Wall to see what's emerged and give your thoughts and feedback regarding the draft values.

Make sure to check the website SandyPaceofProgress.Org or December newsletter to find out about upcoming events in the new year!

