



Memorandum

To: Planning Commission
From: Niall Connolly, Director of Community Development
Date: August 28, 2026
Re: Geologic Hazard Ordinance

Introduction

The Town adopted a geologic hazard ordinance (section 10-15F of the Town Code) in 2021. The stated purpose of the ordinance is as follows:

The purpose of this geologic hazard ordinance is to promote and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Springdale, protect the infrastructure and financial health of Springdale, and minimize adverse effects of geologic hazards to public health, safety, and property by encouraging wise land use and development.

The natural setting of Springdale is such that geologic hazards affect much of the Town. The code defines the “Geologic Hazard Study Area” in section 10-15F-4. This includes areas at risk of landslide, liquefaction, rockfall and radon gas hazards.

Since 2021, the Planning Commission has reviewed numerous projects involving geologic hazards. During reviews more recently, the Commission has expressed that it would be beneficial to make some clarifications to this section of the Code. In particular, to resolve confusion over when geotechnical reports may be involved, and at what stage in the approval process this should happen.

Potential Clarifications

The first step in assessing geologic hazards is the geotechnical report. The geotechnical report includes recommendations on whether a further, more detailed, geologic hazard investigation is needed. Section 10-15F-5(A) sets out the situations where a geotechnical report is required. These are as follows:

1. Subdivision approval process;
2. Design/development review process for any new building over 500 square feet in area; and
3. Any addition to an existing building when the combined area of the existing building and new addition exceed 1,000 square feet in area;
4. Any structure intended for human occupancy; and
5. In any other instance where the DCD determines the site or soil conditions warrant a geotechnical report.

In addition, section 10-15F-9 states that a geologic hazard investigation report may be required for “any...land use entitlement”. This is quite a broad statement, and may benefit from being defined more closely.

The Commission may wish to consider the following questions:

1. Does the list of situations where a geotechnical report is required (i.e. 10-15F-5(A)) cover all of the situations it should?
2. Does the language need any clarification?
3. Should the Code provide more clarity on what stage of the development process the geotechnical report is required?
4. 10-15F-9 indicates that a geologic hazard investigation may be required for any land use entitlement. Is this too broad, or is it beneficial to keep it broad to allow flexibility? For example, should some permits, such as sign permits or fence permits be automatically exempt?
5. Is it possible to craft the language in such a way that investigations are provided for proposals that create a genuine risk, while not overburdening lower risk types of development?