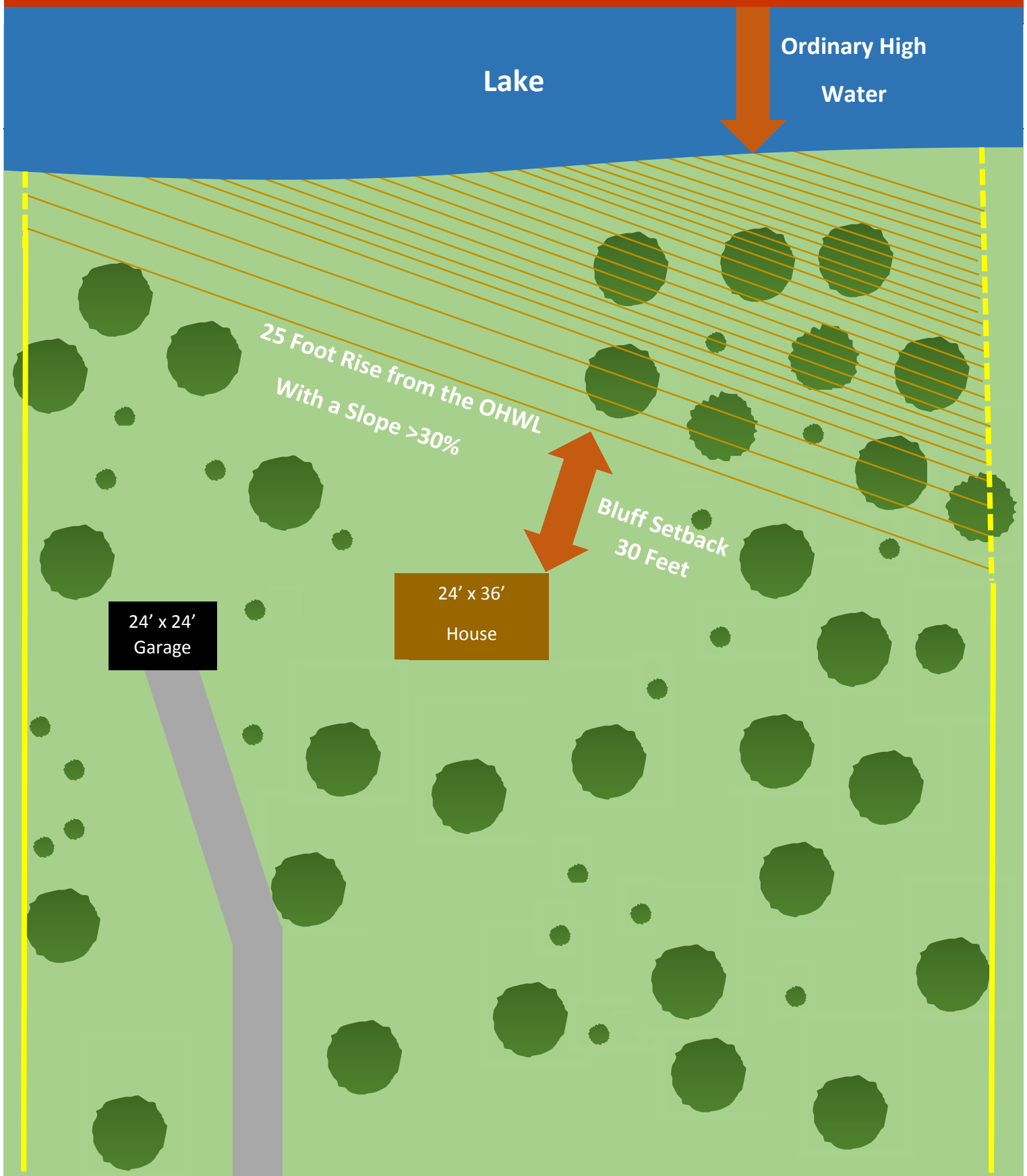




# Bluff Standards

St. Louis County Planning and Community Development



## Bluff Definitions

**Bluff** - A topographic feature such as a hill, cliff, or embankment having the following characteristics:

1. Part or all of the feature is located in a shoreland area;
2. The slope rises at least 25 feet above the ordinary high water level of the water body;
3. The grade of the slope from the toe of the bluff to a point 25 feet or more above the ordinary high water level averages 30 percent or greater; and
4. The slope must drain toward the water body.

**Bluff Impact Zone** - A bluff and land located within 20 feet from the top of a bluff.

**Bluff, toe** - The point on a bluff where there is, as visually observed, a clearly identifiable break in the slope, from a gentle slope to steep slope, as defined.

**Bluff, top** - The point on a bluff where, as visually observed, there exists a clearly identifiable break in the slope, from a steep slope, as defined, to a gentle slope.

## Bluff Area Standards

Unless other provisions have been established for specific soil conditions, the following standards shall apply in bluff areas:

1. The land must slope towards a public water.
2. The land must rise a minimum of 25 feet from the ordinary high water level.
3. The land has a slope of 30% but, if at any location within the slope, the percent slope becomes 18% or less over a 50 foot run, or there is an obvious break on the slope, the bluff impact zone shall not include that area.

**Shallow Soils Bluff Standard:** This standard applies to a bluff where the soil depth over bedrock averages 24 inches or less. Where this condition exists, structures may be placed on the bluff at a setback from the ordinary high water level that equals 150% of the standard setback requirement, provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. The parcel shall have suitable area set aside for a sewage treatment system and, if required, expansion area.
2. Erosion control standards consistent with Soil and Water Conservation District guidelines shall be followed.
3. The shore impact zone shall be one-half the new structure setback.
4. Approved sewage treatment and, if required, expansion area exists.
5. Sufficient screening and vegetative buffer exists.

## Bluff Standards for Nonconforming Structure Addition

**Principal** structures that meet the required setback from shoreline, but do not conform to the bluff setback, may expand with permit without limits to the size of expansion if:

- The original structure has a minimum of 600 square feet in floor area and has never had an addition that caused the floor area to meet or exceed 600 square feet.
- Adequate vegetative screening exists.
- Erosion control guidelines are followed.
- It shall be demonstrated to the county that effective erosion control measures will be taken, especially during the construction period.
- The addition does not come within the shore impact zone or closer than twice the minimum property line setback standard.

If the structure is less than 600 square feet in floor area, an addition of 50% of floor area is permitted without variance provided:

- The property line setback standards set above are followed; and;
- Erosion control measures that conform to the technical standards of the Soil and Water Conservation District are taken.

**Accessory structures** that meet the normally required setbacks, but not the bluff setback, may gain an addition, provided compliance with all other provisions in county ordinances can be demonstrated.

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