

Development Services - Permit Application Center

P.O. Box 11706, or 155 Johnston Street

Rock Hill, South Carolina 29731-1706

Phone: 803-329-7080 or 803-329-7089

FAX: 803-329-7228 -- website: www.cityofrockhill.com



CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION:

Conservation subdivisions are an alternative development pattern intended to preserve and protect open space and significant natural resources. This design approach permanently protects the most valuable natural landscape features and ecological functions on a site by preserving an interconnected network of environmentally sensitive areas or common protected open space while only allowing development to occur on the remaining portion of the site. *Development utilizing the conservation subdivision option shall be limited to the construction of single-family detached or attached dwellings within the Rural Holding (RH) and Single-Family-2 (SF-2) zone districts. Two-to-four family dwellings and townhouses may also be permitted in accordance with Section 7-200(E)(2), Maximum Residential Density.*

General Procedure: The procedures and requirements for review of a Conservation Subdivision shall be the same as those for a *Preliminary Plat for Subdivision* (Section 2-300(I)(5)(b)), and once approved, it shall be considered to have received approval of a Preliminary Plat for Subdivision, in addition to approval as a Conservation Subdivision. Except as exempted below, Conservation Subdivision shall be subject to all the other requirements of subdivision, and shall be required to receive approval of:

- *Detailed Construction Plans* (Section 2-300(I)(5)(c)),
- *Intermediate Field Survey Plat* (Section 2-300(I)(5)(d)),
- *Inspection of Public Improvements* (Section 2-300(I)(5)(e)), and
- *Final Plat for Subdivision* (Section 2-300(I)(5)(f)).

In addition to complying with the standards for the approval of subdivision, a Conservation Subdivision shall comply with the standards in Section 7-200, *Conservation Subdivision*. Development utilizing the conservation subdivision option shall be **exempted** from the following standards:

- (1) Section 6-200(C), *Retention of Existing Tree Canopy*, outside of the open space set-aside area;
- (2) Section 6-300(D), *Site Landscaping*;
- (3) Section 6-800(A)(2)(b), *Internal Street Connectivity*;
- (4) Section 7-100(B)(1)(f), *Cul-de-sac and Temporary Dead End Streets*; and
- (5) Section 7-100(B)(1)(i), *Alleys*.

General Development Standards: A Conservation Subdivision shall meet the following:

- (1) *Minimum Project Size:* At least ten (10) acres in area (unless exempted by the Planning Commission);
- (2) *Maximum Residential Density and Required Open Space Set-Aside:*
 - (a) *Sliding Scale Density:* Comply with the following density and open space set-aside sliding scale. Primary conservation areas as described in 7-200(F), Open Space Set-Aside Standards, shall not be included when calculating the gross density of the conservation subdivision.
 1. 35% open space = 2.0 dwelling units per gross acre;
 2. 40% open space = 2.5 dwelling units per gross acre;
 3. 50% open space = 3.0 dwelling units per gross acre.
 - (b) *Density Bonus:* Be permitted an additional density bonus of 0.5 dwelling units per gross acre for provision of the following:
 1. The development contains more than 55% open space set-aside; and
 2. The development contains a mixture of low density housing types such as detached single family dwellings, attached single family dwellings, two-to-four family dwellings and townhouses. Attached units shall not exceed 20% of the development yield.
- (3) *Maximum Number of Units:* Not exceed the maximum number of units and minimum required number of access points specified in Table 7-100(B)(2), Required Subdivision Access. Section 7-100(B)(1)(e)3., Exceptions, shall not apply;
- (4) *Lot Area:* Have no minimum individual lot size, except that single family detached dwellings within a conservation subdivision utilizing the density bonus provision mentioned above shall be limited to a minimum lot size of 7,500sf;
- (5) *Setbacks:*
 - (a) *Front Yard Setbacks:* Provide a minimum front yard setback of twenty (20) feet; and
 - (b) *Side and Rear Yard Setbacks:* Not be subject to minimum standards.
- (6) *Lot Configuration:* Utilize a lot configuration, such that:
 - (a) Impervious surfaces are minimized;
 - (b) All lots, to the greatest extent practicable, abut common open space on at least one side. A local street may separate lots from the open space. All lots not abutting common open space shall be

- provided with safe, convenient pedestrian access to the open space;
 - (c) Loss of woodlands is minimized;
 - (d) If agricultural uses are being maintained, lots shall be configured in a manner that maximizes the usable area remaining for such agricultural uses with appropriate buffers between agricultural uses and residential structures; and
 - (e) Residential structures are oriented to maximize solar gain in the winter months.
- (7) **Stormwater Management Requirements:** Utilize Low Impact Development (LID) techniques or a combination of LID and conventional stormwater management strategies ensuring that:
- (a) The use of curb and gutter is minimized and open swales are maximized;
 - (b) Roof down spouts drain to porous surfaces;
 - (c) Peak discharges during the 10-year, 24-hour storm event shall be no more than pre-development conditions;
 - (d) The development should capture 80% of the total suspended solids from the 10-year, 24-hour storm event;
 - (e) Landscape plantings should be used to increase infiltration and decrease runoff; and
 - (f) Natural open drainage systems shall be preserved.

Open Space Set-Aside Standards: The location, nature, configuration, and use of the open space shall be determined by the following regulations and criteria and shall comply with the design standards in Section 6-600(C)(3), *Design Standards for Open Space Set-Asides*:

- (1) **Delineation of Conservation Areas:** Open space set-asides shall be divided into primary and secondary conservation areas as described below. Applicants proposing conservation subdivision plans shall first preserve primary conservation areas and then designate additional open space for preservation as secondary conservation areas to attain the required percentage of open space set-aside. A majority of the open space set-aside must be accessible by the public or by the residents of the development.
- (a) **Primary Conservation Areas:** Primary conservation areas have been determined as significant resources existing on a site that are deemed inappropriate for development. The following are considered Primary Conservation Areas and should be identified, delineated and preserved as such:
1. Streams, lakes, and other water resources;
 2. Wetlands;
 3. Floodplains;
 4. Riparian buffers;
 5. Greenways;
 6. Habitats of endangered or threatened species;
 7. Archaeological sites, cemeteries, burial grounds; and
 8. Prohibitive/Severe slopes.
- (b) **Secondary Conservation Areas:** Secondary Conservation Areas represent significant resources of the natural landscape that could be preserved but exist on land that may lack constraints to development. The following are considered Secondary Conservation Areas and should be identified, delineated and preserved as such:
1. Mature woodlands, heritage trees, and forests;
 2. Precautionary/Moderate slopes;
 3. Important historic and archeological sites, structures or features;
 4. Significant natural features and scenic viewsheds such as ridgelines, peaks and rock outcroppings and scenic pastures, meadows and hedgerows;
 5. Prime agricultural lands of at least five contiguous acres;
 6. Existing trails that connect to adjacent areas; and
 7. Water features such as drainages, canals, ditches, natural ponds and retention and detention ponds.
- (2) **Allowable Uses:** The following uses shall be permitted within open-space set -asides within conservation subdivisions:
- (a) Passive recreational uses in accordance with Section 6-600(C)(4)(b), *Passive Recreational Uses*;
 - (b) Agricultural uses, (see Section 4-200(D)(1), *Agriculture*); and
 - (c) Required drainage or other utility easements.
- (3) **Tree Canopy Retention:** Except as needed for streets or public utilities, removal of existing tree canopy from open space set-aside areas is prohibited.
- (4) **Ownership Requirements:** The open space set-aside area shall comply with the ownership requirements in Section 6-600(D), *Ownership of Open Space Set-Asides*.

Prepare preliminary plat using appropriate checklist (Major Subdivision or Minor Subdivision) and the Rock Hill Zoning Code.