



SUBDIVISION REVIEW POLICIES
Relating to Residential Compounds and
Cluster Subdivisions
Adopted December 14, 2016

**For Applicants Submitting a
Residential Compound Plan**

A residential compound is a reduced density subdivision with a private road which is approved at the discretion of the Planning Commission. Please refer to §218-54 of the Charlestown Zoning Ordinance for regulations governing density, lot dimensional standards and private road requirements.

Any residential compound consisting of six or more lots shall be subject to the provisions of a residential cluster subdivision. Please refer to §218-52 of the Zoning Ordinance for regulations governing density, lot dimensional standards and open space requirements.

Applicants proposing a cluster residential compound shall submit at least two concept plans for review by the Planning Commission at the pre-application phase. Prior to accepting a concept plan, the Planning Commission should undertake a site walk with the applicant.

PLANNING COMMISSION

When a residential compound is designed as a cluster subdivision, it is the policy of the Planning Commission to apply the dimensional requirements of a cluster, as follows:

Minimum lot size

R-40: 20,000 SF

R-2A: 1 acre

R-3A: 1 acre

Lot frontages and building setbacks

There are no minimum lot frontages required for a residential compound (only that necessary for adequate vehicular access for normal and emergency purposes). However, for compounds that are cluster subdivisions, the Planning Commission will require at least the minimum frontages and setbacks for a cluster.

R-40: 100 ft frontage

40 ft front, 50 ft rear, 25 ft side

R-2A: 125 ft frontage

50 ft front, 60 ft rear, 25 ft side

R-3A: 125 ft frontage

50 ft front, 60 ft rear, 25 ft side

Open Space Set Aside

All cluster subdivisions require a set aside of at least 40% of the total developable land of the parcel as protected open space. A residential compound designed as a cluster must also provide an open space set aside unless the compound is being designed with one large parcel under single ownership to be used for farming or conservation.

Due to the reduced density of a residential compound, it is the policy of the Planning Commission to require **60% of the developable land as open space**. This land can be commonly owned by the homeowners or consist of conservation easements on individual lots.

Constraints to Development vs Developable Land

“Constraints to Development” is defined in both the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations and is used to determine overall density of a parcel as well as minimum lot sizes. It includes physical constraints (wetlands, floodways, ledge) as well as street and utility rights-of-way.

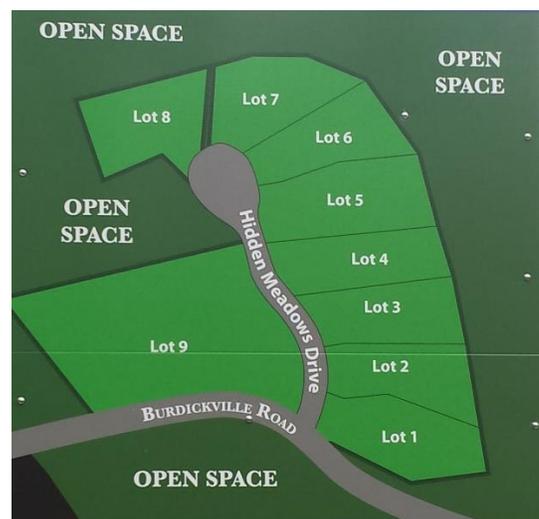
“Developable Land” is used to calculate required open space, and it excludes only physical constraints to development, not land to be used for streets and utilities.

These physical constraints include the wetland and perimeter buffer, land in a velocity zone or floodways, and areas of

ledge or rock outcrop within 4 feet of the surface. It also includes “any unique sites having historical, archaeological values or protected species of flora or fauna”.

Use of Open Space

The cluster regulations allow up to 35% of the total open space to be used for active recreation such as playgrounds and tennis courts. Not more than 25% of the open space shall be of impervious surface. **When reviewing a cluster residential compound plan, it is the policy of the Planning Commission to allow only 14% of the total developable land area to be used for active recreation and only 5% of the developable land area to be impervious (building footprints and paved surfaces).** For example, a parcel with 12 acres of developable land must have at least 7.2 acres (60%) of developable land as open space and no more than 1.7 acres (14%) to be used as active recreation and 0.6 acres (5%) to be impervious.



For Applicants Submitting Plans on Parcels with Wetlands

Stormwater design standards have advanced in recent years and subdivisions designed within areas that can potentially impact wetlands and water bodies require the applicant's engineer to design according to these updated standards.

Site Engineering Review

Charlestown does not have a town engineer on staff. The Planning Commission does have the ability to use the services of an outside professional for project review (per Section 3.3B of the Subdivision Regulations). It is the policy of the Planning Commission that any subdivision involving road construction, particularly on a site with wetlands, be peer reviewed at the applicant's expense. This will generally be discussed at the pre-application phase and required by the master plan phase.

Lot Design

When a cluster subdivision is being designed, all wetland and buffer areas should be within the protected open space and not be part of individual lots. Where wetlands are within a lot boundary, the lot setback lines (front, rear and side) shall be adjusted to exclude the wetland and buffer.

Lot sizes should be consistent with the areas of Limits of Disturbance (see next column). For example, a lot with a LOD of 1 acre should not be sized at 2 or 3 acres, which can encourage clearing beyond the LOD.



Environmental and Lot Boundaries

Stormwater plans for sites with wetlands, whether or not a wetland permit is applied for, require the issuance of a RIPDES permit from the DEM Division of Water Resources. The permit approvals are based on the anticipated site run-off with specified Limits of Disturbance (LOD) on each lot. These must be marked in the field prior to construction, although they are intended to be permanent site restrictions unless a new or amended RIPDES permit is applied for.

It is the policy of the Planning Commission to require a semi-permanent field marking of the LOD on each lot. This can be done with posts of wood, fiberglass or durable plastic, marked and installed at a height of at least three feet. In addition, as required in the Subdivision Regulations, all lot boundary corners are to be marked in the field, not just those at corners and angle points on the street rights-of-way. These are to consist of permanent reinforced concrete or granite, although alternatives such as rebar with caps in wetland areas or drill holes in existing stone walls may be permitted where appropriate.