

Glossary

Cluster development: This approach maintains the designated density for a zoning district, but requires all development to occur only on a portion of the entire site. For example, if a 100 acre site is being developed in a district that permits a density of one unit per ten acres, a cluster plan would place all ten units on a section of the site, perhaps about 25 acres (20 acres of 2 acre homesites plus 5 acres for roads and septic systems) with the least environmental sensitivity. The remaining 75 acres would consist of open space.

Conservation easements: These legally recorded instruments can limit environmental impacts through development restrictions. The easement records on the deed that certain development activities are prohibited (such as the placing of buildings or paved surfaces) and that an entity other than the property owner has the right to enforce the limitation described as part of the easement. Conservation easements are usually placed on particularly sensitive lands such as wetlands, stream corridors, steep slopes, woodlands, and scenic areas.

Conservation subdivision design (CSD): The Conservation Subdivision Design approach begins with the applicant's identification of open space resources present on the site to be developed (i.e., environmentally constrained land, agricultural land, historic or scenic views, and forested lots.) This first step is what distinguishes the Conservation Subdivision approach from the more traditional "clustering" approach. This resource identification will form the basis for designating conservation lands in the new subdivision. Once conservation lands are identified and designated, areas where development would be most appropriate are identified. The appropriate number of homes based on allowable density for the zoning district is then designed into the development areas of the site in a creative fashion. Flexible lot sizes and area and bulk standards facilitate this creativity. Identifying road alignments and lot lines are the final steps in the process.

The four-step conservation subdivision design process is as follows:

1. Identify conservation areas – potential development areas follow once the conservation areas have been "greenlined."
2. Locate house sites
3. Align streets and trails
4. Draw in the lot lines

Critical Environmental Area (CEA): As stated by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, an area must have an exceptional or unique character with respect to one or more of the following to be designated as a CEA:

- > A benefit or threat to human health;
- > A natural setting (e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space and areas of important aesthetic or scenic quality);

> Agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational values; or an inherent ecological, geological or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change.

Following designation as a CEA, the potential impact of any Type I or Unlisted Action on the CEA's environmental characteristics is a relevant area of environmental concern and must be evaluated in the determination of significance prepared pursuant to Section 617.7 of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA.)

Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS): Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), a Proposed Action and series of alternatives are equally evaluated in a Generic Environmental Impact Statement. With the opportunity of evaluating the potential impacts of any Type I action, such as a Comprehensive Plan, and its alternatives, the designated lead agency (in Woodbury's case, the Town Board) is able identify those initiatives that best serve a community's interests.

High-density Development: High-density residential development is most often defined as multi-level apartments or condominiums. Although in Woodbury, developments such as Timber Ridge townhouses and Woodbury Heights condominiums may be considered high-density (relative to other residential development in Town), residential areas in major metropolitan areas that are truly high-density accommodate hundreds or even thousands of residents per acre.

Impervious surface: Impervious surfaces are mainly constructed surfaces—rooftops, sidewalks, roads, and parking lots—covered by impenetrable materials such as asphalt, concrete, brick, and stone. These materials seal surfaces, repel water and prevent precipitation and stormwater from infiltrating soils. Soils compacted by urban development are also highly impervious.

Incentive zoning: A local legislature can provide a system of zoning incentives to land developers in exchange for the provision of community benefits by those developers. In setting up such a system, the legislature leaves existing zoning provisions in place, but permits more intensive development of the land in exchange for certain community benefits. Incentives can be provided to developers of raw land or to those who propose the expansion of existing structures, the adaptive reuse of older buildings, or the redevelopment of brownfield sites and other distressed parcels in older, developed areas.

The incentives that may be offered to developers include adjustments to the density of development, for example, allowing more residential units or a greater building floor area than is otherwise permitted under the zoning ordinance. Incentives can also include adjustments to the height, open space, use or other requirements of the underlying zoning ordinance. These incentives are given in exchange for the developer providing one or more community benefits, such as open space or parks, affordable housing, day care or elder care, or other specific physical, social or cultural amenity of benefit to the residents of the community.

LEED: The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System[®] is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Members of the U.S. Green Building Council representing all segments of the building industry developed LEED and continue to contribute to its evolution.

Moderate-density Development: While this definition differs from community to community, in Woodbury it generally refers to residential development of apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and senior housing. Single-family residential developments with homes built on lots that are smaller than 1/4-acre could also be considered moderate-density.

Overlay zone: applies a common set of standards to a designated area that may cut across several different conventional or “underlying” zoning districts. The standards of the overlay zone apply in addition to those of the underlying zoning district.

State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA): New York’s State Environmental Quality Review Act requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental impacts equally with social and economic factors during discretionary decision-making. This means these agencies must assess the environmental significance of all actions they have discretion to approve, fund or directly undertake. SEQRA requires the agencies to balance the environmental impacts with social and economic factors when deciding to approve or undertake an “Action.”

If an action is determined not to have significant adverse environmental impacts, a determination of nonsignificance (Negative Declaration) is prepared. If an action is determined to have potentially significant adverse environmental impacts, an “Environmental Impact Statement” is required. The SEQRA process uses the EIS to examine ways to avoid or reduce adverse environmental impacts related to a proposed action. This includes an analysis of all reasonable alternatives to the action. The SEQRA decision-making process encourages communication among government agencies, project sponsors and the general public.

Transfer of development rights (TDR): TDR programs permit the density of a zoning district to increase in a receiving zone as density is lowered in a sending zone. TDR can be used to minimize environmental impacts in critical areas that would be designated sending zones (i.e. the development rights are “sent” elsewhere, to a receiving zone). Receiving zones, where density would be permitted to be increased, should be farther from critical areas, or where, through innovative design, density can be increased without increasing environmental impacts.

Transit village: The transit village is a compact, mixed-use, walkable community (or part of a community), centered around the transit station that, by design, invites residents, workers, visitors, and shoppers to drive their cars less and ride mass transit more.

Workforce housing: Housing for the working middle-class—including those employed in manufacturing, service, retail, office, and other jobs that pay minimum wage or higher.