



**April 24, 2009**

*(This is the sixth in a series of updates on zoning in Kenton County. The series is intended to brief city and county elected officials on issues being addressed by NKAPC in the **2020 Sourcebook**, a new model zoning ordinance for Kenton County's local jurisdictions. We hope you find it timely and thought provoking and encourage you to contact us using the link below if we can provide more information or answer any questions.)*

## **The top ten reasons to love Conservation Subdivisions...**

The rolling hills, valleys, and streams of Kenton County are the pride and delight of residents and civic leaders alike. Maintaining those unique features while also creating more housing opportunities can prove to be difficult if regulations don't recognize both as goals. One of the tools that the *2020 Sourcebook* offers developers is Conservation Subdivision regulations which encourage a blending of growth and conservation.

Conservation Subdivisions provide many advantages compared to conventional subdivisions.

### **Conservation Subdivisions provide economic advantages**

As included in the *2020 Sourcebook*, Conservation Subdivisions are permitted **by right** in residential zones (i.e. a zone change / public hearing before the planning commission is not required). By-right development requires an administrative review by staff and thus can result in a more efficient review process with more predictable outcomes.

Developers may vary development standards to achieve the maximum allowable base density, a number determined by the existing zoning of the area they wish to develop. A developer may also take advantage of numerous density bonuses to increase the net allowable density.

Clustered home sites reduce the cost of infrastructure (i.e. roads and utilities) construction and maintenance.

A community where the environment has been preserved is easier to market and sell than one in which land has been leveled or stripped of trees. Homes in Conservation Subdivisions tend to hold their value and appreciate faster than those found in conventional residential subdivisions.

Preservation of natural areas and integration of recreational amenities as part of the development may reduce the demand for public open space, parks, playing fields and other recreational areas commonly required.

## **Conservation Subdivisions benefit the environment**

Conservation Subdivisions protect the upland buffers alongside water bodies and watercourses that filter stormwater flowing into the ponds, streams, and creeks, etc.

Layout flexibility makes it easier for site designers to locate subsurface septic systems on those parts of the property best suited for these facilities.

Density bonuses encourage the conservation of environmentally-sensitive areas.

## **Conservation Subdivisions provide social and recreational advantages**

Conservation Subdivisions enhance the potential for pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and create greater opportunities for community activities, thus encouraging a stronger sense of neighborhood and communal pride.

Density bonuses can encourage the preservation of historic structures, social and economic integration, and access to and the integration of open space throughout the county.

## **A little more work for a lot of advantage**

Because a Conservation Subdivision proposal may proceed by right, it will have to meet more rigid design guidelines than a conventional subdivision. A pre-application meeting with the staff is required to look at the proposed development and address issues regarding the design of the proposal.

As included in the *2020 Sourcebook*, a Conservation Subdivision is required to include the following:

- a minimum of 30 percent open space;
- both an active and passive component to the open space;
- a traffic impact study; and
- a visual proposal which includes existing topography and natural features, adjacent land uses, internal street systems, and connections with adjacent open spaces and pedestrian trails.

By taking advantage of the new Conservation Subdivision regulations, developers can pursue housing developments that can be more diversified and interesting while preserving the natural resources that make our county such a unique place to live.

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To contact a staff member who can answer your questions about the issues covered in this update or on the *2020 Sourcebook* in general, click [here](#).