

Conservation Development



What are the objectives of Conservation Development?

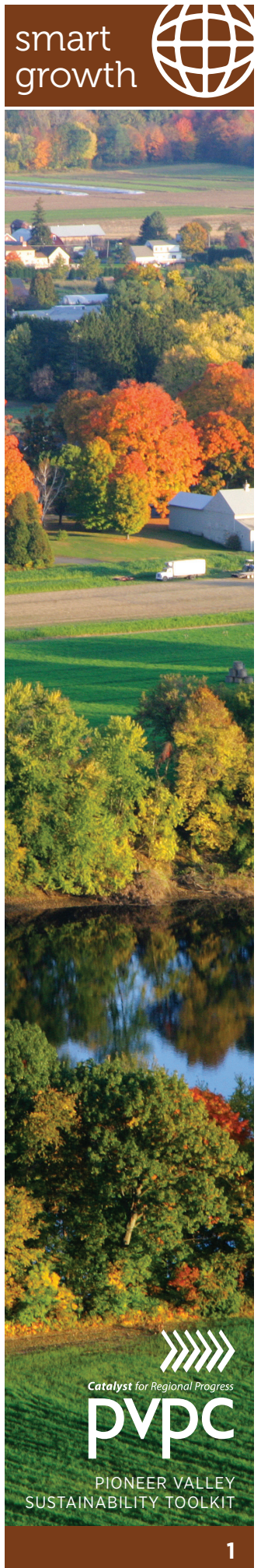
Conservation Developments are compact residential developments that use flexible dimensional standards in order to preserve and enhance rural town character, protect open space, natural resources, and scenic areas, as well as promote the use of sustainable and energy efficient development standards .

Why do we need Conservation Developments?

Growth in many of our small cities and towns is a result of residential development, primarily Approval Not Required (ANR) developments. ANR developments need only an endorsement from a town's planning board that the proposed residential parcel meets the town's frontage requirements along a public way. This type of development has changed the rural character in many of our communities and is the greatest contributor to sprawl development in the region. Conservation Developments are a flexible way for ANRs to consider the rural character of the community and promote green energy sources in residential development

How does Conservation Development bylaw work?

Conservation Development bylaws allow applicants to use common driveways and flexible area and frontage requirements to create permanent open space and avoid standard Approval Not Required and subdivision development. Conservation Developments are allowed by-right with a Site Plan Approval process. Through this approval process, towns work with the applicant to consider development standards such as Stormwater Management, Low Impact Development, Green Energy and Open Space Connectivity. A portion of the development must also be set aside as permanently protected open space.



Conservation Developments allow applicants flexibility in designing the layout of the lots. The bylaw does not require a minimum lot size or minimum frontage requirement, but allows the applicant to consider the designing the development around the unique characteristics of the land. The number of buildable lots is determined by setting an average size lot size for the entire development as a whole, which number is determined by the community. Design flexibility is also enhanced by permitting the use of common driveways rather than a formal subdivision road.

DID YOU KNOW...

In a national random sample survey of 1,130 adults age 18 and older, about 55 percent of Americans prefer a smart growth community and 45 percent prefer a sprawl community, after hearing detailed description of the two community types. (2004 National Community Preference Survey, conducted for Smart Growth America and National Association of Realtors).

EXAMPLES FROM THE PIONEER VALLEY

Highland Communities Initiative Green Development project

PVPC and the Highlands Communities Initiative have partnered with the towns of Chesterfield, Conway, Montgomery, and Worthington to develop and adopt the Conservation Development bylaw by Annual Town Meeting in 2011. PVPC and HCI will be providing technical support to these communities as they develop a campaign for adoption of this bylaw in their communities.

A model bylaw or strategy is included in the Pioneer Valley Sustainability Toolkit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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