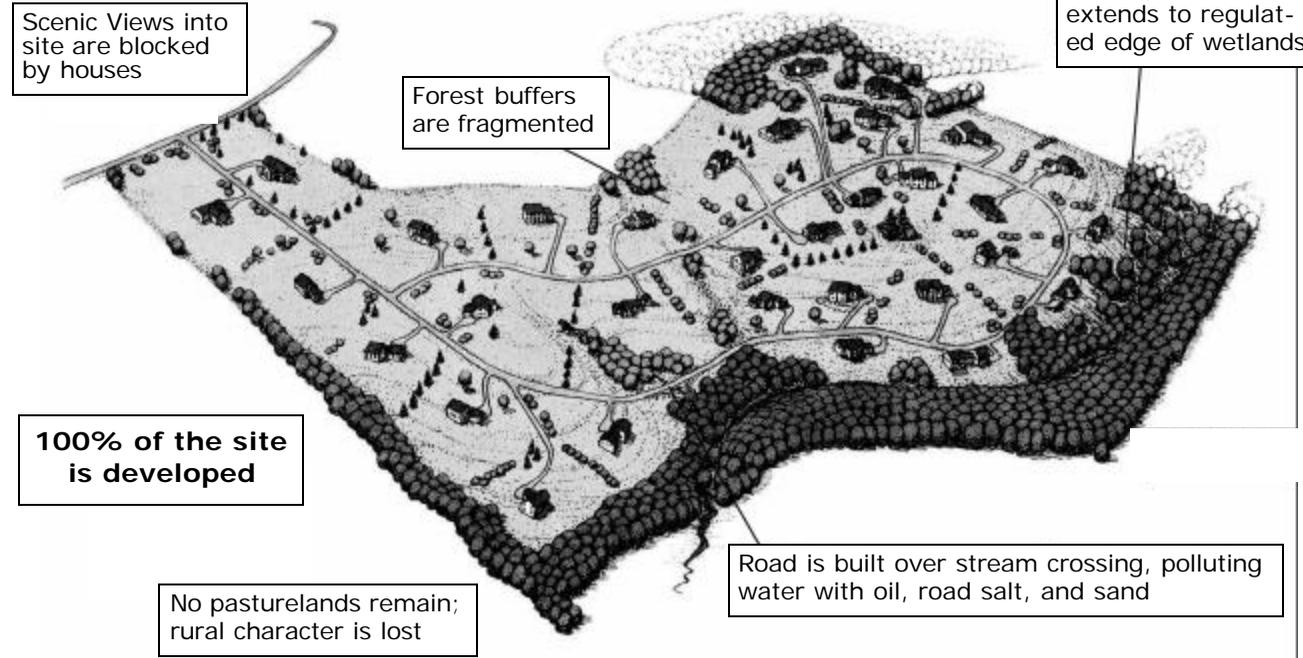


Conventional Zoning A Need for Change

Most of the development in Rhode Island follows a conventional subdivision scheme. Local ordinances mandate rigid requirements for large lot size, setback distance, and road frontage, which leads to uniform, grid-like development patterns. Since there are no provisions to preserve any open space, all the land in a community will eventually be developed, making it impossible to protect the area's unique features and meaningful open space. Developing land in this way actually encourages loss of community character and increases negative impacts to the environment. It is inevitable that development will occur, but the problem is not growth itself, rather the way it is happening.

Conventional Subdivision



Key Features of Conservation Development:

- 1 Important natural, cultural, and recreational resources are identified for permanent protection.
- 2 Development is flexibly designed from the context of the site, neighborhood, and community.
- 3 Development is guided to the areas of the site that are the most appropriate.
- 4 Preserved Open Space is carefully planned for links to adjacent parcels to form continuous open space corridors.

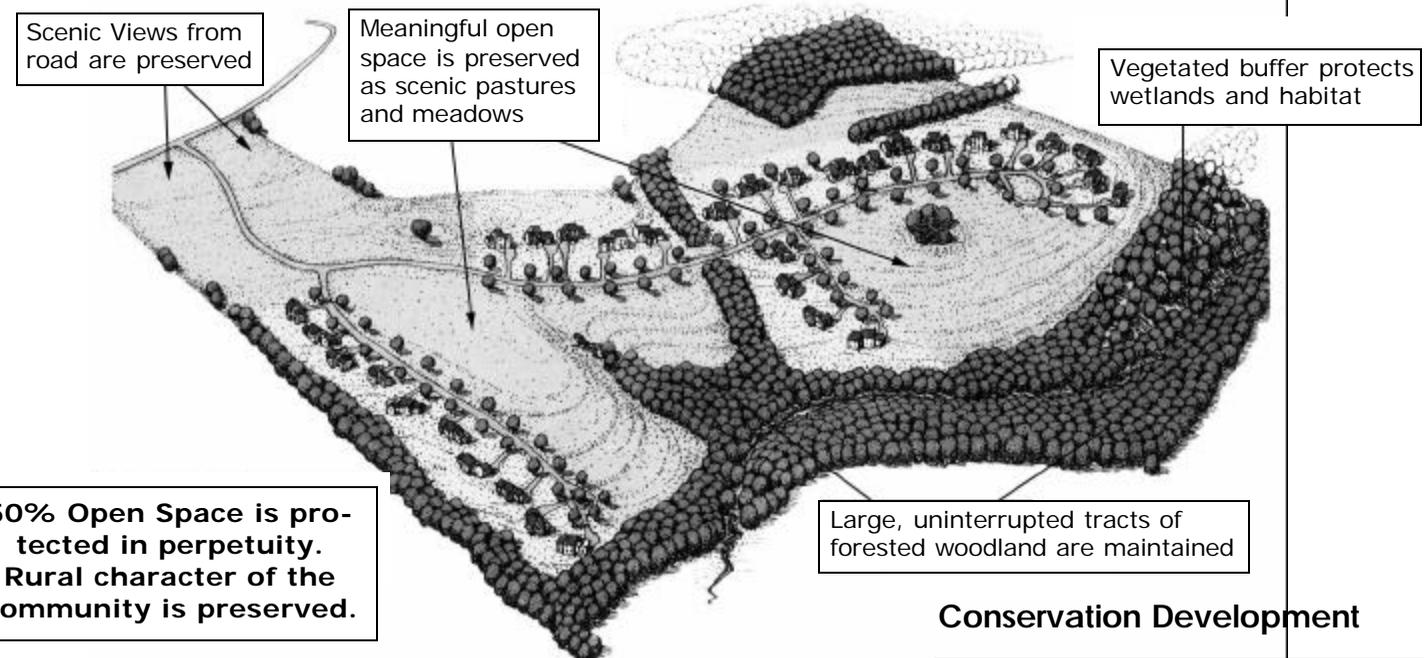
Conservation Development Growing Greener

There *is* an alternative. Conservation Development is a creative land use technique that allows a community to guide growth to the most appropriate areas within a parcel of land, in order to minimize negative impacts to the environment and preserve community character. The goal is to protect at least fifty percent of the parcel in perpetuity as meaningful open space, with no cost to the community.

As more of Rhode Island is developed, protecting open space is getting harder and more expensive for communities.

With Conservation Development, towns do not have to buy or maintain the open space. Moreover, the planning flexibility of Conservation Development allows common open space areas to be linked to existing greenways to form continuous corridors.

By carefully situating houses and lot lines, Conservation Development protects natural and cultural amenities that add not only to the economic value of the property, but to the quality of life as well.



Conservation Development

Advantages of Conservation Development



Economic Advantages:

- § Preserves land without buying it.
- § Reduces town services costs for road maintenance and school transportation.
- § Hastens review process by avoiding sensitive areas early on.
- § Reduces development costs with shorter utility lines, streets, driveways and sidewalks.
- § Increases value and marketability of site.

Environmental Advantages:

- § Preserves vegetated buffers along wetlands, streams, and ponds to protect water quality.
- § Reduces polluted runoff by cutting down on impervious surfaces like streets and driveways.
- § Protects critical habitat and travel corridors for wildlife.
- § Reduces fragmentation of forest blocks and other unique habitats.

Social and Recreational Advantages:

- § Protects historical and cultural features.
- § Preserves aesthetic features and scenic views.
- § Provides both passive and active recreation areas-- walking, biking, hiking, sport fields.
- § Promotes a neighborhood/community atmosphere.
- § Provides gathering spaces for neighborhood functions-- community buildings, gazebos, etc.



The Conservation Development Manual

- RI DEM has developed a guidance manual that walks you through the process of building a Conservation Development subdivision, step by step.
- Each step addresses the who, what, where, when, and how of each part of the process. It provides checklists to keep you on track, resources to help guide you, and ideas of how to identify and preserve features of the landscape.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



DEM Sustainable Watersheds Office at 401-222-3434 or visit our web site at www.rib-asins.org

Not ready to lose your town's special places?



CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT

A CREATIVE WAY TO GROW WHILE PRESERVING COMMUNITY CHARACTER