

## State of Maine Subdivision Review Criteria

*[Note: Criteria #8. Aesthetic, cultural and natural values provides the primary opportunity to clarify and expand on municipal subdivision review from a Beginning with Habitat perspective. Land use decisions made at the local level present the best opportunity for conserving Maine's rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals and rare and exemplary natural communities. It is critical that your community take the time to review performance standards and adjust them to best capture the specific types of resources identified as priorities in your comprehensive or open space plans. Although wetlands, streams, and shorelines are guaranteed some level of protection under other state and federal laws, features such as rare plants and rare natural communities rarely receive formal protection at the state or federal level. Similarly, scenic areas, historic sites, and water access should each typically fall squarely into local jurisdiction if they are to be conserved during the development review process.]*

The Statutory Review Criteria can be found in MRSA Title 30-A § 4404 Subdivision Review Criteria. The State statute language is as follows:

When adopting any subdivision regulations and when reviewing any subdivision for approval, the municipal reviewing authority shall consider the following criteria and, before granting approval, must determine that: [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

**1. Pollution.** The proposed subdivision will not result in undue water or air pollution. In making this determination, it shall at least consider:

A. The elevation of the land above sea level and its relation to the flood plains; [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

B. The nature of soils and subsoils and their ability to adequately support waste disposal; [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

C. The slope of the land and its effect on effluents; [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

D. The availability of streams for disposal of effluents; and [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

E. The applicable state and local health and water resource rules and regulations; [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]  
[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

**2. Sufficient water.** The proposed subdivision has sufficient water available for the reasonably foreseeable needs of the subdivision; [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

**3. Municipal water supply.** The proposed subdivision will not cause an unreasonable burden on an existing water supply, if one is to be used; [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

**4. Erosion.** The proposed subdivision will not cause unreasonable soil erosion or a reduction in the land's capacity to hold water so that a dangerous or unhealthy condition results; [1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

**5. Traffic.** The proposed subdivision will not cause unreasonable highway or public road congestion or unsafe conditions with respect to the use of the highways or public roads existing or proposed and, if the proposed subdivision requires driveways or entrances onto a state or state aid highway located outside the urban compact area of an urban compact municipality as defined by Title 23, section 754, the Department of Transportation has provided documentation indicating that the driveways or entrances conform to Title 23, section 704 and any rules adopted under that section;[2001, c. 560, §1 (amd).]

**6. Sewage disposal.** The proposed subdivision will provide for adequate sewage waste disposal and will not cause an unreasonable burden on municipal services if they are utilized;[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new); c. 497, §8 (amd).]

**7. Municipal solid waste disposal.** The proposed subdivision will not cause an unreasonable burden on the municipality's ability to dispose of solid waste, if municipal services are to be utilized;[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new); c. 497, §8 (amd).]

**8. Aesthetic, cultural and natural values.** The proposed subdivision will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, significant wildlife habitat identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife or the municipality, or rare and irreplaceable natural areas or any public rights for physical or visual access to the shoreline;[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new); c. 497, §8 (amd).]

**9. Conformity with local ordinances and plans.** The proposed subdivision conforms with a duly adopted subdivision regulation or ordinance, comprehensive plan, development plan or land use plan, if any. In making this determination, the municipal reviewing authority may interpret these ordinances and plans;[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

**10. Financial and technical capacity.** The subdivider has adequate financial and technical capacity to meet the standards of this section;[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]

**11. Surface waters; outstanding river segments.** Whenever situated entirely or partially within the watershed of any pond or lake or within 250 feet of any wetland, great pond or river as defined in Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter I, article 2-B, the proposed subdivision will not adversely affect the quality of that body of water or unreasonably affect the shoreline of that body of water.

A. When lots in a subdivision have frontage on an outstanding river segment, the proposed subdivision plan must require principal structures to have a combined lot shore frontage and setback from the normal high-water mark of 500 feet.

(1) To avoid circumventing the intent of this provision, whenever a proposed subdivision adjoins a shoreland strip narrower than 250 feet which is not lotted, the proposed subdivision shall be reviewed as if lot lines extended to the shore.

(2) The frontage and set-back provisions of this paragraph do not apply either within areas zoned as general development or its equivalent under shoreland zoning, Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter I, article 2-B, or within areas designated by ordinance as densely developed. The determination of which areas are densely developed must be based on a finding that existing development met the definitional requirements of section 4401, subsection 1, on September 23, 1983;

[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new).]  
[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new); c. 497, §8 (amd).]

**12. Ground water.** The proposed subdivision will not, alone or in conjunction with existing activities, adversely affect the quality or quantity of ground water;[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new); c. 429, §1 (amd); c. 497, §8 (amd).]

**13. Flood areas.** Based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps and Flood Insurance Rate Maps, and information presented by the applicant whether the subdivision is in a flood-prone area. If the subdivision, or any part of it, is in such an area, the subdivider shall determine the 100-year flood elevation and flood hazard boundaries within the subdivision. The proposed subdivision plan must include a condition of plan approval requiring that principal structures in the subdivision will be constructed with their lowest floor, including the basement, at least one foot above the 100-year flood elevation;[1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (new); Pt. C, §10 (new); c. 429, §1 (amd); c. 497, §8 (amd); c. 878, Pt. A, §85 (rpr).]

**14. Freshwater wetlands.** All freshwater wetlands within the proposed subdivision have been identified on any maps submitted as part of the application, regardless of the size of these wetlands. Any mapping of freshwater wetlands may be done with the help of the local soil and water conservation district;[1989, c. 404, §2 (new); c. 429, §2 (new); c.497, §9 (new); c. 772, §3 (amd); c. 878, Pt. G, §5 (rpr).]

**15. River, stream or brook.** Any river, stream or brook within or abutting the proposed subdivision has been identified on any maps submitted as part of the application. For purposes of this section, "river, stream or brook" has the same meaning as in Title 38, section 480-B, subsection 9;[1991, c. 838, §12 (amd).]

**16. Storm water.** The proposed subdivision will provide for adequate storm water management;[1991, c. 838, §12 (amd).]

**17. Spaghetti-lots prohibited.** If any lots in the proposed subdivision have shore frontage on a river, stream, brook, great pond or coastal wetland as these features are defined in Title 38, section 480-B, none of the lots created within the subdivision have a lot depth to shore frontage ratio greater than 5 to 1;[1997, c. 226, §2 (amd).]

**18. Lake phosphorus concentration.** The long-term cumulative effects of the proposed subdivision will not unreasonably increase a great pond's phosphorus concentration during the construction phase and life of the proposed subdivision;[2003, c. 622, §2 (amd).]

**19. Impact on adjoining municipality.** For any proposed subdivision that crosses municipal boundaries, the proposed subdivision will not cause unreasonable traffic congestion or unsafe conditions with respect to the use of existing public ways in an adjoining municipality in which part of the subdivision is located; and[2003, c. 622, §3 (amd).]

**20. Lands subject to liquidation harvesting.** Timber on the parcel being subdivided has not been harvested in violation of rules adopted pursuant to Title 12, section 8869, subsection 14. If a violation of rules adopted by the Maine Forest Service to substantially eliminate liquidation harvesting has occurred, the municipal reviewing authority must determine prior to granting approval for the subdivision that 5 years have elapsed from the date the landowner under whose ownership the harvest occurred acquired the parcel. A municipal reviewing authority may request technical assistance from the Department of Conservation, Bureau of Forestry to determine whether a rule violation has occurred, or the municipal reviewing authority may accept a determination certified by a forester licensed pursuant to Title 32, chapter 76. If a municipal reviewing authority requests technical assistance from the bureau, the bureau shall respond within 5 working days regarding its ability to provide assistance. If the bureau agrees to provide assistance, it shall make a finding and determination as to whether a rule violation has occurred. The bureau shall provide a written copy of its finding and determination to the municipal reviewing authority within 30 days of

receipt of the municipal reviewing authority's request. If the bureau notifies a municipal reviewing authority that the bureau will not provide assistance, the municipal reviewing authority may require a subdivision applicant to provide a determination certified by a licensed forester.

For the purposes of this subsection, "liquidation harvesting" has the same meaning as in Title 12, section 8868, subsection 6 and "parcel" means a contiguous area within one municipality, township or plantation owned by one person or a group of persons in common or joint ownership. This subsection takes effect on the effective date of rules adopted pursuant to Title 12, section 8869, subsection 14.

[ 2003, c. 622, §4 (new). ]