

Maine State Planning Office
Model Subdivision Regulations
Performance Standards

(for full text to this model subdivision ordinance visit
<http://www.smrpc.org/landuse/subord/Article%201.pdf>)

10.6 Impact on Natural Beauty, Aesthetics, Historic Sites, Wildlife Habitat, Rare Natural Areas or Public Access to the Shoreline.

A. Preservation of Natural Beauty and Aesthetics.

1. The plan shall, by notes on the final plan and deed restrictions, limit the clearing of trees to those areas designated on the plan.
2. Except in areas of the municipality designated by the comprehensive plan as growth areas, the subdivision shall be designed to minimize the visibility of buildings from existing public roads. Outside of designated growth areas, a subdivision in which the land cover type at the time of application is forested, shall maintain a wooded buffer strip no less than fifty feet in width along all existing public roads. The buffer may be broken only for driveways and streets.
3. The Board may require the application to include a landscape plan that will show the preservation of any existing large specimen trees, the replacement of trees and vegetation, and graded contours.
4. Unless located in areas designated as a growth area in the comprehensive plan, building location shall be restricted from open fields, and shall be located within forested portions of the subdivision. When the subdivision contains no forest or insufficient forested portions to include all buildings, the subdivision shall be designed to minimize the appearance of buildings when viewed from existing public streets. When a proposed subdivision street traverses open fields, the plan shall include the planting of street trees. Street trees shall include a mix of tall shade trees and medium height flowering species. Trees shall be planted no more than fifty feet apart.
5. When a proposed subdivision contains a ridge line identified in the comprehensive plan as a visual resource to be protected, the plan shall restrict tree removal and prohibit building placement within 50 feet vertical distance of the ridge top. These restrictions shall appear as notes on the plan and as covenants in the deed.

B. Retention of Open Spaces and Natural or Historic Features.

1. If any portion of the subdivision is located within an area designated by the comprehensive plan as open space or greenbelt, that portion shall be reserved for open space preservation.
2. If any portion of the subdivision is located within an area designated as a unique natural area by the comprehensive plan or the Maine Natural Areas Program the plan shall indicate appropriate measures for the preservation of the values which qualify the site for such designation.
3. If any portion of the subdivision is designated a site of historic or prehistoric importance by the comprehensive plan, National Register of Historic Places, or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, appropriate measures for the protection of the historic or prehistoric resources shall be included in the plan. When the historic features to be protected include buildings, the placement and the architectural design of new structures in the subdivision shall be similar to the historic structures. The Board shall seek the advice of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in reviewing such plans.
4. The subdivision shall reserve sufficient undeveloped land to provide for the recreational needs of the occupants. The percentage of open space to be reserved shall depend on the identified needs for outdoor recreation in the portion of the municipality in which the subdivision is located according to the comprehensive plan, the proposed lot sizes within the subdivision, the expected demographic makeup of the occupants of the subdivision, and the site characteristics, but shall constitute no less than 5% of the area of the subdivision. In determining the need for recreational open space the Board shall also consider the proximity of the subdivision to neighboring dedicated open space or recreation facilities; and the type of development. Sites selected primarily for scenic or passive recreation purposes shall have such access as the Board may deem suitable and no less than 25 feet of road frontage.
5. Subdivisions with an average density of more than three dwelling units per acre shall provide no less than fifty percent of the open space as usable open space to be improved for ball fields, playgrounds or other similar active recreation facility. A site intended to be used for active recreation purposes, such as a playground or a play field, should be relatively level and dry, have a total frontage on one or more streets of at least 200 feet, and have no major dimensions of less than 200 feet.
6. Land reserved for open space purposes shall be of a character, configuration and location suitable for the particular use intended.
7. Reserved open space land may be dedicated to the municipality.

8. Where land within the subdivision is not suitable or is insufficient in amount, and when suggested by the comprehensive plan, a payment in lieu of dedication may be substituted for the reservation of some or part of the open space requirement. Payments in lieu of dedication shall be calculated based on the percentage of reserved open space that otherwise would be required and that percentage of the projected market value of the developed land at the time of the subdivision, as determined by the municipal tax assessor. The payment in lieu of dedication shall be deposited into a municipal land open space or outdoor recreation facility acquisition or improvement fund.

C. Protection of Significant Wildlife Habitat.

If any portion of a proposed subdivision lies within:

1. 250 feet of the following areas identified and mapped by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Beginning with Habitat Project or the comprehensive plan as:
 - a. Habitat for species appearing on the official state or federal lists of endangered or threatened species;
 - b. High and moderate value waterfowl and wading bird habitats, including nesting and feeding areas;
 - c. Shorebird nesting, feeding and staging areas and seabird nesting islands;
 - d. Critical spawning and nursery areas for Atlantic sea run salmon as defined by the Atlantic Sea Run Salmon Commission; or
2. 1,320 feet of an area identified and mapped by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as a high or moderate value deer wintering area or travel corridor;
3. Or other important habitat areas identified in the comprehensive plan or in the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Beginning with Habitat Project;

the applicant shall demonstrate that there shall be no adverse impacts on the habitat and species it supports. There shall be no cutting of vegetation within such areas, or within the strip of land extending at least 75 feet from the edge or normal high-water mark of such habitat areas. The applicant must consult with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and provide their written comments to the Board. The Board may require a report to be submitted, prepared by a wildlife biologist, selected or approved by the Board, with demonstrated experience with the wildlife resource being impacted. This report shall assess the potential impact of the subdivision on the significant habitat and adjacent areas that are important to the maintenance of the affected species and shall describe any additional appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that the subdivision will have no adverse impacts on the habitat and the species it supports.