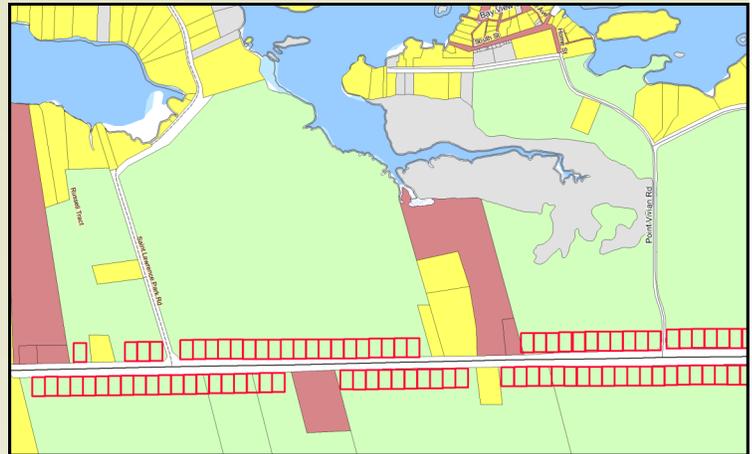


CURBING STRIP DEVELOPMENT

Just a few new houses or businesses along an existing public road, subdividing less than five percent of the surrounding land, can block the views of 80 to 90 percent of the open landscape. Unfortunately, the cheapest way to develop is to take advantage of the public road system to provide direct access to newly cut-off parcels. Small subdivisions, usually less than five or ten lots at a time, line roads with individual lots, each with a separate driveway spaced 100 feet or so apart. As a result, a large amount of fields, forests, and open land becomes hidden behind houses and their yards.

Similar to strip commercial development, strip residential subdivisions not only block views from public roads, but the rows of separate driveways create multiple conflict points for the flow of through traffic. The piecemeal pattern of development impacts the scenic character of the road system and often makes roads less safe. Towns can encourage alternative patterns for minor subdivisions that gradually create a connected interior street system, or at the very least promote shared drives with provisions for possible future connections.



Potential strip development example: sketched parcels outlined in red would meet the minimum lot size of only 15,000 sq. ft., however predominant views along scenic by-way could be impacted.



Strip frontage example: a series of homes fronting a 55 mph highway, with 11 driveways relatively close together.

Alternative side road example: housing area with 8 homes on a single side road.

In order to limit strip development, consider placing new housing in the countryside along side roads or shared drives, with buffering, rather than lining state, county, or rural primary roads with house lots or commercial uses.

“Locally significant vistas, viewshed corridors, ridge lines, and working landscapes should be protected. For example, the visual impact of development on coastal and waterfront areas, including the National and State Seaway Trail Scenic Byway, should be minimized and avoided where possible.”

“Infill development should be favored over the linear expansion of development in greenfields along highways that expand commercial and residential areas and services in previously undeveloped rural areas. Infill development where services and infrastructure already exist maintains the integrity of our existing communities.”

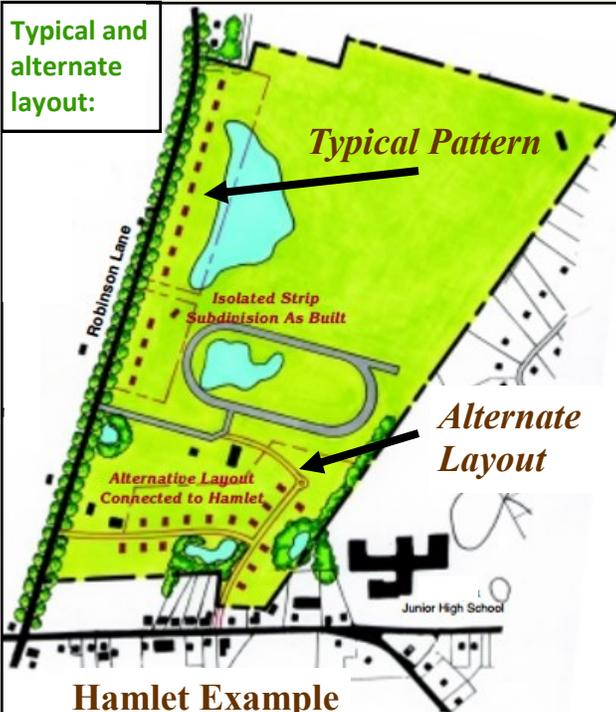
Growth and Development Guidelines, Jefferson County Planning Board - 2005

Creative development: Residential subdivisions should be designed to settle back into the countryside, within or along tree lines, preferably along a side road. Houses following this pattern off the main highway experience less traffic noise, and encounter less traffic than those that front on primary highways or collector roads.

While it may be easier for landowners to lop off a few lots along the public right-of-way, local boards should look for longer term solutions that protect the safety, capacity, and rural character of the road system. In the example below, a creative alternate could be to locate them along a new street that directly connects the houses to the hamlet.



Image: Dutchess County Planning



Subdivision Design example: shows houses fronting a side road (top) which preserves open space and farmland views, and provides substantial green setbacks, rather than the same number of house lots facing the frontage along the primary road (bottom).

- ADVANTAGES TO ALTERNATE FORM OF CONNECTED DEVELOPMENT ALONG SIDE OR INTERIOR ROADS**
- Can allow easy walking to nearby stores or schools;
 - Create more scenic home sites facing farmland and natural features, not facing a busy road;
 - Reinforce the village or hamlet center with a secondary street system;
 - Preserve farm frontage as a greenbelt surrounding a village or hamlet;
 - Provide more protected streets and front yards for children;
 - Retain existing rural roads where feasible.



Concentrated Business Development example: Retailers and restaurants have concentrated near the interstate highway in the town (in the upper left). This pattern leaves much of the countryside to remain farmed and relatively rural.