

Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan Review



Alternative Subdivision Design

What is Alternative Subdivision Design?

Conventional subdivision design typically carves the land into relatively uniform parcel sizes and traditional patterns based on prescriptive minimum parcel size regulations. This approach does not encourage consideration of topographical constraints or environmentally sensitive features in site design. An example is the creation of parcels adjacent to a watercourse each having lot lines that run through the riparian area.

Alternative subdivision design is a general term used for a more sustainable approach to subdivision which helps limit sprawl, reduce fragmentation of ecological systems, and encourage more sustainable land use patterns. Alternative subdivision design also provides an opportunity to be more responsive to site-specific topographical constraints and environmental features. Alternative subdivision design allows for adaptive site design by supporting more flexibility in parcel layout and minimum parcel size.



Conventional



Alternative

Comparison of conventional and alternative subdivision design

Conventional Subdivision Design

- ⇒ The form of subdivision that residents are most accustomed to.
- ⇒ Results in parcels that are more or less uniform in size.
- ⇒ Less opportunity to protect environmentally sensitive features.
- ⇒ More difficult to adapt to site constraints.
- ⇒ Lot lines typically run through riparian areas, ravines, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- ⇒ Ownership can be simple, strata, or shared interest.

Alternative Subdivision Design

- ⇒ Typically results in a range of parcel sizes.
- ⇒ Overall density is maintained (not increased).
- ⇒ More opportunity to preserve green space and protect environmentally sensitive features.
- ⇒ Accommodates creativity and flexible subdivision design.
- ⇒ Encourages opportunities for shared services such as community water and community sewer.
- ⇒ Helps foster a sense of place and community.
- ⇒ Ownership can be fee simple, strata, or shared interest.

Alternative Subdivision Design

Alternative subdivision design in a Rural Village Centre context

In Rural Village Centres, the Official Community Plan (OCP) does not set a minimum parcel size or maximum number of parcels as these are locations where increased density is encouraged. Creativity in subdivision design is encouraged to create compact mixed use communities that make efficient use of land and have a reduced ecological footprint.

Within the context of Rural Village Centres, alternative rural subdivision design could take many forms including single detached, ground-oriented townhomes, row housing, and condominiums.

How could the remainder/residual lands be preserved in perpetuity?

Alternative subdivision design results in a remainder or area of residual land that could be preserved for various reasons. The RDN may use a combination of the following tools to ensure that these areas are preserved in perpetuity.

- ⇒ Zoning changes
- ⇒ Section 219 Covenant
- ⇒ Conservation Covenant
- ⇒ Land Transfer (purchase, return to Crown, transfer to public ownership, etc.)

Did you know?

- ⇒ The RDN has completed the Alternate Forms of Rural Development study which is an in-depth analysis of options for rural residential areas. [Click here](#) to view this study.

Alternative subdivision design outside of Rural Village Centres

On lands located outside of Rural Village Centres, the smallest parcel size supported by the OCP is 2,000 m² (0.5 acres).

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) supports alternative subdivision design on lands which are designated by the RGS as Rural Residential. The RGS support is premised on there being no increase in the overall density or the number of new lots, and provided that the new parcels can be served with potable water and wastewater disposal systems in a manner that does not degrade the environment or water services. The RGS also requires the remainder to be preserved in perpetuity.

In general, development within a rural residential context should be limited to ground-oriented detached forms of housing. This ensures compatibility with surrounding uses and helps encourage higher density forms of development to be located within the Rural Village Centres.

The use of alternative subdivision design in this context may be to preserve working agricultural or resource lands, protect a community watershed, preserve stands of mature forest, or to protect an environmentally sensitive feature. It may also be used to increase marketability or to reduce the per unit cost of providing subdivision servicing infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer or any combination of the above.

How could the OCP support alternative subdivision design?

The authority over land use falls entirely within RDN jurisdiction. Should the community support this concept, the OCP could include policies that apply at the time of rezoning similar to the policies contained in the Bowser Village Plan.

Policies could apply to lands located in Rural Village Centres and to lands located outside of Rural Village Centres where alternative subdivision design is supported by the RGS.

