

# STATE OF NEW YORK

---

8123--A

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

June 3, 2019

---

Introduced by M. of A. ENGLEBRIGHT, D'URSO, L. ROSENTHAL, ORTIZ, THIELE  
-- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation -- reported and referred to the Committee on Rules -- Rules Committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to preserving ecological integrity, wildlife and open space in the Adirondack park

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative findings and statement of purpose. When enacted  
2 in nineteen hundred seventy-three, the Adirondack park land use and  
3 development plan represented an historic application of natural  
4 resource-based land use control and economic opportunity for the park's  
5 residents and communities. For over forty years, the plan has sought to  
6 insure optimum overall conservation, protection, preservation, develop-  
7 ment and use of the unique scenic, aesthetic, wildlife, recreational,  
8 open space, historic, ecological and natural resources of this cherished  
9 area and the essential interdependence of economic and community needs  
10 through balanced apportionment of land use within the park.

11 Conservation science and land use planning techniques have advanced  
12 since the enactment of the plan. It is now recognized that the spatial  
13 pattern of development is fully, if not more, as ecologically important  
14 as its overall density.

15 Subdivision of land into large residential lots, or rural sprawl,  
16 impairs ecosystem function, decreases biotic integrity, alters species  
17 behavior and composition, increases human-wildlife conflicts, fragments  
18 ownership, impairs cohesive land management, undermines the open space  
19 character of the park, and threatens its agricultural and forestry work-  
20 ing landscapes.

21 Conservation development is an approach to the design, construction  
22 and stewardship of development that achieves functional protection of

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD13035-03-9

1 natural resources, while providing social and economic benefits to human  
2 communities. It requires a process that ensures thorough analysis of  
3 ecological systems and environmental conditions before the developer  
4 actually designs the project. This saves the preparation of detailed  
5 subdivision plans, the most expensive part of design, to the end of the  
6 planning process. The process provides for smaller initial costs and  
7 allows for agency and public input before design funds are exhausted and  
8 ensures that the developer is not committed to a design that is not  
9 supported by ecological and environmental conditions.

10 The purpose of this act is to strengthen the land use and development  
11 plan and its administration by incorporating modern conservation design  
12 principles therein and to curtail rural sprawl. It is acknowledged that  
13 each property is unique and that subdivision should be pursued in  
14 accordance with ecologically-sound principles including appropriate  
15 dedication and preservation of substantial open space areas in further-  
16 ance of environmental protection goals and working landscapes.

17 § 2. Section 802 of the executive law is amended by adding six new  
18 subdivisions 17-b, 18-a, 18-b, 18-c, 43-a and 52-a to read as follows:

19 17-b. "Conservation subdivision" means the division of any tract of  
20 land into a residential subdivision of twenty-five or more lots, parcels  
21 or sites in low intensity use areas, ten or more lots, parcels or sites  
22 in rural use areas, and five or more lots, parcels or sites in resource  
23 management areas. A subdivision involving solely lawfully existing prin-  
24 cipal buildings and associated infrastructure shall not be deemed a  
25 conservation subdivision. A subdivision created pursuant to paragraph c  
26 of subdivision one of section eight hundred eleven of this article is  
27 not a conservation subdivision.

28 18-a. "Development envelope" means the area of land within a residen-  
29 tial lot, parcel or site within which all principal buildings, guest  
30 cottages, roads, driveways, and other structures and infrastructure must  
31 be located. Roads and trails associated with forestry, agriculture and  
32 open space recreation are allowed outside of the development envelope  
33 pursuant to the open space management and stewardship plan.

34 18-b. "Ecological impact zone" means that area of a project site  
35 extending six hundred sixty feet beyond the development envelope for  
36 each development site and any contiguous developed sites.

37 18-c. "Ecological site analysis" means an analysis of a project site  
38 that identifies important ecological systems, natural resources and  
39 habitat on and adjacent to the project site and identifies areas deserv-  
40 ing protection and potential development areas for house lots, roads and  
41 associated infrastructure.

42 43-a. "Open space management and stewardship plan" means a plan for  
43 the ownership, configuration, permanent legal protection, forestry,  
44 agriculture and recreational open space uses, and management of desig-  
45 nated open spaces. Open space management and stewardship plan also  
46 means a plan for the ownership, configuration and management of open  
47 spaces providing permanent legal protection of open spaces while allow-  
48 ing for forestry, agriculture and recreation open spaces.

49 52-a. "Project site" means the land included in a project upon which  
50 the applicable overall intensity guideline is calculated pursuant to  
51 paragraph c of subdivision ten of section eight hundred nine of this  
52 article.

53 § 3. Subparagraph 2 of paragraph f of subdivision 3 of section 805 of  
54 the executive law, as amended by chapter 348 of the laws of 1973, is  
55 amended to read as follows:

1 (2) Purposes, policies and objectives. The basic purpose and objective  
2 of rural use areas is to provide for and encourage those rural land uses  
3 that are consistent and compatible with the relatively low tolerance of  
4 the areas' natural resources and the preservation of the open spaces  
5 that are essential and basic to the unique character of the park. Another  
6 objective of rural use areas is to prevent strip development along  
7 major travel corridors in order to enhance the aesthetic and economic  
8 benefit derived from a park atmosphere along these corridors.

9 Residential development and related development and uses should occur  
10 [~~on large lots or~~] in relatively small clusters on carefully selected  
11 and well designed sites. This will provide for further diversity in  
12 residential and related development opportunities in the park.

13 § 4. Subparagraph 2 of paragraph g of subdivision 3 of section 805 of  
14 the executive law, as amended by chapter 348 of the laws of 1973, is  
15 amended to read as follows:

16 (2) Purposes, policies and objectives. The basic purposes and objec-  
17 tives of resource management areas are to protect the delicate physical  
18 and biological resources, encourage proper and economic management of  
19 forest, agricultural and recreational resources and preserve the open  
20 spaces that are essential and basic to the unique character of the park.  
21 Another objective of these areas is to prevent strip development along  
22 major travel corridors in order to enhance the aesthetic and economic  
23 benefits derived from a park atmosphere along these corridors.

24 [~~Finally, resource management areas will allow for residential~~] Resi-  
25 dential development [~~on substantial acreages or~~] and related development  
26 and uses should occur in relatively small clusters on carefully selected  
27 and well designed sites.

28 § 5. Section 809 of the executive law is amended by adding a new  
29 subdivision 11-a to read as follows:

30 11-a. All conservation subdivisions shall be reviewed pursuant to this  
31 subdivision. a. (1) The applicant shall submit to the agency:

32 (i) an initial ecological site analysis reviewing the natural  
33 resources of the project site and adjacent lands, utilizing current  
34 local and regional data and research conclusions, including identifica-  
35 tion and mapping of important ecological areas;

36 (ii) preliminary on-site analysis to identify important ecological  
37 areas and other site features relevant to the development consider-  
38 ations; and

39 (iii) a concept plan for the project, based on the data specified in  
40 clauses (i) and (ii) of this subparagraph that minimizes the area of the  
41 project subject to ecological disturbance, protects important ecological  
42 areas, promotes clustering such that ecological impact zones are over-  
43 lapped as much as possible, takes into account existing open space and  
44 ecological impact zones on adjacent properties and identifies areas for  
45 development that have appropriate soils and slopes.

46 (2) The agency shall undertake an initial site visit to access natural  
47 resources and site features.

48 (3) The agency shall provide for a public comment period and hold a  
49 public meeting on public notice, regarding the initial data and concept  
50 plan.

51 (4) The agency shall specify to the applicant any additional study of  
52 the project site necessary to complete a final ecological site analysis  
53 and specify any other information requirements relevant to the develop-  
54 ment considerations. The ecological site analysis, as detailed in para-  
55 graph b of this subdivision, shall be submitted to the agency for  
56 approval.

1 (5) The applicant shall thereafter prepare the subdivision plan, which  
2 shall include parcel boundaries and development envelopes, location of  
3 open space and the draft open space management and stewardship plan. All  
4 plans shall be based upon the approved ecological site analysis and  
5 other site resources relevant to the development considerations. Upon  
6 submission of these plans, as accepted by the agency, the application  
7 review process governed by subdivisions two, three, four, five and six  
8 of this section shall commence. The agency may request additional infor-  
9 mation regarding the proposed subdivision plan and the open space  
10 management and stewardship plan and may require revisions to the plans  
11 before deeming the application complete.

12 (6) No conservation subdivision shall be approved unless (i) the find-  
13 ings required by subdivision ten of this section are made, and (ii)  
14 ownership, configuration, protection, compatible uses and management of  
15 the designated open space is based on the ecological site analysis, and  
16 is included in the open space management and stewardship plan and incor-  
17 porated in permit conditions.

18 (7) The agency may provide by regulation for a variance from specific  
19 conservation development requirements if it determines that such  
20 requirements would cause an undue economic hardship and are not required  
21 to protect the ecological resources of the project site.

22 (8) The agency shall have a standing to enforce by appropriate civil  
23 action any permit condition, deed restriction, covenant, easement or  
24 other permanent means of protecting open space.

25 b. The ecological site analysis shall address the following consider-  
26 ations:

27 (1) identification of important ecological and sensitive areas of the  
28 project site including, but not limited to, habitat, wetlands, flood-  
29 plains, natural drainage ways and steep slope areas;

30 (2) the terrestrial and aquatic wildlife inhabiting, breeding on,  
31 migrating across, traversing or otherwise using the project site;

32 (3) corridors, including ridgelines and riparian zones, providing  
33 means by which wildlife may travel to adjacent or contiguous areas  
34 providing habitat, breeding or spawning areas or meeting other needs;

35 (4) vegetative buffers on the shorelines of lakes, ponds, rivers and  
36 streams and protection and preservation of vernal pools and riparian  
37 areas;

38 (5) large intact forest tracts for protection of wildlife habitat and  
39 biodiversity, especially for protection of species native to or other-  
40 wise requiring such tracts; for watershed preservation and for miti-  
41 gation of climate change, while allowing forestry, agriculture and  
42 recreation uses;

43 (6) minimizing the creation of man-made and hardened edges between  
44 forested tracts, roads and other open areas and the length of roads and  
45 driveways;

46 (7) the size, configuration and proposed uses of the project site to  
47 be preserved by permanent legal means, while allowing for recreation,  
48 forestry and agriculture uses on dedicated open spaces.

49 c. Designated open space shall be, to the greatest extent possible:

50 (1) located outside the boundaries of all lots, parcels or sites for  
51 the development and designed to protect the ecology and open space of  
52 the park; and

53 (2) configured applying these design factors:

54 (i) include the important ecological areas of the property, based on  
55 the approved ecological site analysis;

1 (ii) provide connectivity to any neighboring areas of open space,  
2 other protected areas, working forests and agriculture;

3 (iii) not be divided by subdivision roads, driveways or other perma-  
4 nent man-made fragmenting features;

5 (iv) create one large, contiguous area rather than many small areas.  
6 If large areas are not feasible, than a few smaller, important ecologi-  
7 cal areas of the site may be protected if connected by corridors  
8 comprised of natural landcover with widths of no less than three hundred  
9 thirty feet; and

10 (v) minimize edge-to-area ratio of the open space and make it as  
11 uniform as possible.

12 d. (1) The minimum open space required in a conservation subdivision  
13 is:

14 (i) in low intensity use areas, forty percent of the project site. If  
15 the open space design reaches sixty percent, there may be allowed a ten  
16 percent density bonus. If it reaches seventy percent, there may be  
17 allowed a twenty percent density bonus.

18 (ii) in rural use areas, fifty-five percent of the project site. If  
19 the open space design reaches seventy percent, there may be allowed a  
20 ten percent density bonus. If it reaches eighty percent, there may be  
21 allowed a twenty percent density bonus.

22 (iii) in resource management areas, seventy-five percent of the  
23 project site. If the open space design reaches eighty-five percent,  
24 there may be allowed a ten percent density bonus. If it reaches ninety  
25 percent, there may be allowed a twenty percent density bonus.

26 (2) Utilization of the calculated density bonus is not guaranteed and  
27 is subject to agency review. The additional principal buildings may be  
28 situated on the project site, or within the same directly contiguous  
29 land use area, pursuant to paragraph c of subdivision ten of this  
30 section. The additional principal buildings may be allowed for use in  
31 the same, but non-contiguous land use area, if within the same town.  
32 This density bonus cannot be utilized in any manner except by agency  
33 permit and only if all the required findings of subdivision ten of this  
34 section are made for the placement of the buildings and other infras-  
35 tructure.

36 § 6. Section 809 of the executive law is amended by adding three new  
37 subdivisions 16, 17 and 18 to read as follows:

38 16. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prevent the agency from  
39 requiring any jurisdictional project pursuant to section eight hundred  
40 ten of this article to be designed in accordance with an ecological site  
41 analysis and developed pursuant to an ecological preservation and  
42 stewardship plan and to provide for the preservation of a portion of the  
43 project site in open space by deed restriction, easement or other legal  
44 means.

45 17. In determining whether a conservation subdivision permit is  
46 required pursuant to this article, the agency shall not consider any  
47 lots lawfully created prior to the effective date of this subdivision.  
48 Nothing in this subdivision shall affect the ability of the agency, by  
49 permit or by any extension thereof, to determine a period of time by  
50 which a permitted subdivision shall be deemed "in existence" as defined  
51 in subdivision twenty-five of section eight hundred two of this article.

52 18. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the agency  
53 to require that any interest in land comprising part of a conservation  
54 subdivision be conveyed to a public body or any other legal entity,  
55 unless the applicant so proposes and the other legal entity agrees.

1 § 7. Subparagraph 3 of paragraph d of subdivision 1 of section 810 of  
2 the executive law, as added by chapter 348 of the laws of 1973, is  
3 amended to read as follows:

4 (3) All land uses and development and all subdivisions of land involv-  
5 ing [~~twenty~~ ten or more residential lots, parcels or sites or residen-  
6 tial units, whether designed for permanent, seasonal or transient use.

7 § 8. Subparagraph 3 of paragraph c of subdivision 1 of section 810 of  
8 the executive law, as added by chapter 348 of the laws of 1973, is  
9 amended to read as follows:

10 (3) All land uses and development and all subdivisions of land involv-  
11 ing [~~thirty-five~~ twenty-five or more residential lots, parcels or sites  
12 or residential units, whether designed for permanent, seasonal or tran-  
13 sient use.

14 § 9. Subparagraph 1 of paragraph b and subparagraph 1 of paragraph c  
15 of subdivision 2 of section 810 of the executive law, as added by chap-  
16 ter 348 of the laws of 1973, are amended to read as follows:

17 (1) Subdivisions of land (and all land uses and development related  
18 thereto) involving [~~ten~~ five or more but less than [~~thirty-five~~ twen-  
19 ty-five lots, parcels or sites, other than subdivisions of land involv-  
20 ing mobile homes.

21 (1) Subdivisions of land (and all land uses and development related  
22 thereto) involving five or more but less than [~~twenty~~ ten lots, parcels  
23 or sites, other than subdivisions of land involving mobile homes.

24 § 10. Nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize the Adiron-  
25 dack park agency to require that any interest in land comprising part of  
26 a conservation subdivision be conveyed to a public body or any other  
27 legal entity.

28 § 11. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day  
29 after it shall have become a law.