



Examples of cluster housing developments

Cluster housing development has been permitted in Hampden for a number of years, but the town has only a few. Well designed cluster projects provide a variety of housing options and outdoor space for walking trails and other recreational pursuits, as well as for gardening and community activities.

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Town of Hampden



# 2018 Zoning Ordinance Amendments

*Making Hampden's zoning user friendly and understandable.*

## Cluster Housing

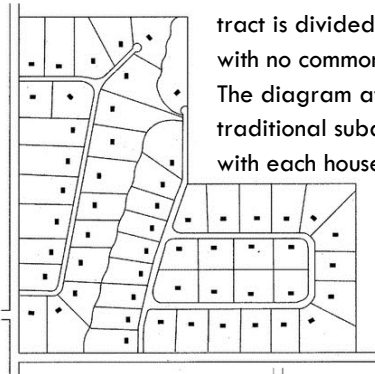
Creating appealing places to live that provide a variety of housing options in a sustainable setting



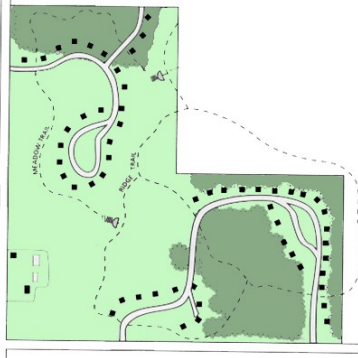
# What is cluster housing?

Cluster housing is a form of subdivision that groups homes on specific areas of a tract of land with the rest of the area kept open for the benefit of all the residents, as opposed to traditional subdivisions where all of the tract is divided into house lots with no common open spaces.

The diagram at right shows a traditional subdivision layout with each house (black dot) on its own lot. The diagram below shows the same tract of land with a cluster housing design.



Both have 55 houses. The cluster design includes trails through fields and wooded areas, and in this design the houses are privately owned while all of the land is held in common. This form of ownership is often attractive to people who no longer want to maintain a lawn, gardens, and the woods on their land by themselves. Cluster housing can provide a viable option for older residents who wish to remain in town as they age.



A range of options in housing type is important in any town, since people have different needs and desires for what they want to live in. Some seek large homes with large yards, while others seek small homes with little or no yard maintenance.

In the current zoning ordinance, cluster housing is allowed in the Residential A and B districts. The requirements are found in Article 3, Sections 7 and 8. In the Residential A district there are two design options each with minimum lot sizes and other dimensional requirements for each lot. There are five design options in the Residential B district, each likewise has its own set of dimensional standards. The open space requirement ranges from 30 to 50 percent, and the maximum gross density ranges from 3.15 to 10 units per acre.

Cluster housing is also allowed in the Rural district, and all of the requirements for that district are found in Article 4, Section 6. The number of units is based on the tract size less 15 percent for roads, and three units for every two acres remaining. In addition, there are specific dimensional standards for the lots within the development.

All of this results in cluster provisions that are not easy to decipher, and thus are not often used. The proposed zoning amendments move all cluster provisions to Article 4 Section 6. Significant amendments are proposed here, many dealing with formatting information to make it



A common design for cluster housing uses small lots for each house, laid out in groups separated by commonly owned open areas.

Avalon Village is an example of cluster housing.

easier to find and understand. A new dimensional table provides requirements for the tract size, frontage, buffers around the perimeter of the development, the minimum amount of open space, and the maximum density for each of the four districts where allowed (the Rural, Residential A and B, and Town Center districts). Of note is that clusters for any type of housing other than single family (i.e. two-family or multi-family) may not have individual lots within the cluster and all land area is to be held in common ownership among the residents of the development. Single family cluster projects can be designed either with or without separate lots for each house; the regulations include dimensional standards for those with separate lots.

For those who choose to use this design option, the proposed amendments include more density bonus options than currently exist. These bonuses reward projects that dedicate greater amounts of open space, allow access to the general public to trails where they connect to trails on abutting lands, or provide at least ten percent of the units to households with moderate incomes.

In order to prevent projects from utilizing only the undevelopable areas of a tract to fulfil the open space requirement, the proposed amendments limit the amount of open space that can be wetland to no more than half of the open space requirement.