

Resolution 101-2018: Town of Caroline Subdivision Review Law of 2018 Design Guidelines

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board adopts the following Design Guidelines to be provided as a document to applicants and used in review of Subdivision Review Applications by the Town's Review Board:

Town of Caroline Subdivision Review Local Law Design Guidelines

General Principles

It is the expectation of the Town of Caroline that the design of any subdivision should be appropriate to the site's physical, natural, agricultural, historic, energy, and cultural features and resources. It is the intent of this section to provide guidelines for the design of subdivided sites.

Guidelines

In reviewing a proposed subdivision, the Review Board shall consider the answers to the following questions. With permission of the property owner, the Board may make a site visit to the proposed subdivision, with notice made to the applicant, to consider alternative designs that may better address the following guidelines. The guidelines are presented in the form of questions to reflect the fact that they are intended to guide a discussion by the Board on the design of a proposed subdivision, not to provide a boilerplate standard for subdivision design.

1. Does the subdivision design comply with all existing local laws?
2. Is the proposed subdivision consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan?
3. Will the proposed subdivision protect all floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes from clearing, grading, filling, or construction (except as may be approved by the Town for essential infrastructure or active or passive recreation amenities)?
4. Will the proposed subdivision preserve and maintain mature woodlands, existing fields, pastures, and meadows and create sufficient buffer areas to minimize conflicts between residential and agricultural uses?
5. If development is located on open fields or pastures because of greater constraints in all other parts of the site, will dwellings be sited on the least prime agricultural soils, or in locations on the far edge of a field, as seen from existing public roads?
6. Will a vegetative buffer be maintained adjacent to wetlands and surface waters, including creeks, streams, springs, lakes and ponds? If not, will such a vegetative buffer of native species be created?
7. Does the design of the subdivision incorporate existing hedgerows and tree lines between fields or meadows, and minimize impacts on large woodlands (greater than five acres), especially those containing many mature trees or significant wildlife habitat?
8. Does the design leave scenic views and vistas unblocked or uninterrupted, particularly as seen from public roads? Does the design avoid siting new construction on prominent hilltops or ridges, by taking advantage of lower topographic features?
9. Does the design incorporate and preserve sites of historic, archeological, or cultural value, and their environs, insofar as needed to safeguard the character of the feature? Such features may include stone walls, spring houses, barn foundations, earthworks, and burial grounds.
10. Does the proposed subdivision affect a Unique Natural Area as identified by the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council? If so, will the impact be mitigated?
11. Will the proposed subdivision protect rural roadside character and improve public safety and vehicular carrying capacity by avoiding development fronting directly onto existing public roads?

12. Will the proposed subdivision provide for safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access between the subdivision and nearby points of interest?
13. Will landscaping be provided in common areas (such as community greens), in cul-de-sac islands, and along both sides of new streets with native species shade trees and flowering shrubs with high wildlife conservation value?
14. Will the proposed subdivision maintain the rural character of the community by incorporating roads that follow the natural topography? Will the proposed subdivision maintain the character of hamlets by including traffic calming measures?
15. Will the proposed subdivision consider site location on brownfield or greyfield property in the Town and account for the embedded energy savings of redeveloping existing structures?
16. Does the proposed subdivision consider its “location efficiency”—housing and related development located in a walkable environment near transportation alternatives, employment opportunities, schools, and other retail service amenities that allow residents to drive less, thereby reducing transportation costs and associated greenhouse gas emissions, as well as possibly reducing the extent needed for new utility infrastructure to the subdivision?
17. Will the proposed subdivision “cluster” its development, allowing for the total number of homes in a given piece of land to be clustered or concentrated more densely onto one or more portions of the land; typically, double the density concentrated on half the acreage? Will such a strategy, such as a conservation subdivision or a cottage community, allow for the development of smaller (often less expensive) homes on smaller (often less expensive) lots, thus providing alternative housing choices for multiple community population groups and providing the opportunity to preserve remaining land for public uses including natural areas, parks, nature/jogging/walking trails, active recreation, and community gardens, among others?
18. Will the proposed subdivision incorporate the use of “green infrastructure”—rain gardens, bioretention areas, vegetated swales/dry swales, green roofs, porous pavement (xeriscaping), stream buffer restoration—into its design to assist in the management, conservation, and re-use of water resources?
19. Will the proposed subdivision consider site location and orientation that maximizes utilization of solar and/or other renewable energy options?
20. Could the proposed subdivision forego the use of fossil fuels and instead consider an energy program that uses an air-source heat pump system, a ground-source (geothermal) heat pump system, or a combination of one powered by solar PV?
21. Will the proposed subdivision address climate change and work to mitigate energy use and greenhouse gas emissions per the NY DEC [*Guide for Assessing Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in an Environmental Impact Statement?*](#)
22. Is the Applicant aware that prior to the Review Board approving a proposed subdivision, it may or be required to refer the subdivision plan to the County Planning Department (pursuant to Tompkins County’s §§ 239-l, -m, and/or -n of the General Municipal Law) for review? Further, as part of this review, the County has formalized Energy Recommendations for New Construction (2016) of proposed developments, and the applicant should be prepared to demonstrate how energy and water use will be managed per these recommendations prior to pursuing final subdivision approval.