Cluster Development
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Introduction

- CD is the grouping of residential properties on a proposed development site in order to use the extra land as open space, recreation or agriculture.
- It is increasingly becoming popular in subdivision development for its low impact and sustainability appeal.
- Dates back to early settlements when houses were grouped to form a common area to defend themselves.
- Today benefits include more green/public space, closer community and an optimal storm water management.
- Issues are outdated zoning, perceptions of personal space and maintenance of common areas.
Background

- Has been around since the earliest communities
- Wasn’t officially a concept until the onset of suburban sprawl
- Was created as the alternative to the ‘conventional subdivision’
• The first conscious application of a Cluster development was in Radburn, NJ
• Many other towns’ in New Jersey applied those principles to their planning notably the ‘village green’ in Hillsborough and Brunswick Hill in South Brunswick
• CD grew in principally in Maryland and Virginia; notably in Reston and American Fairfax County
• Now, its all over the country
What it is?

- Also known as conservation development Cluster Development is a planning approach that is an alternative to conventional subdivision development.
- It is a practice of Low Impact Development that groups residential properties in a proposed subdivision closer together in order to utilize the rest of the land for open space, recreation or agriculture.
- differs from a planned unit development (PUD) due the fact that a PUD contains a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, or other uses were as the cluster development primarily focuses on residential area
Purpose

• Promote integrated site design that is considerate to the natural features and topography
• Protect environmental sensitive areas of the development site, and permanently preserve important natural features, prime agricultural land, and open space.
• Minimize non-point source pollution through reducing the area of impervious surfaces on site
• Encourage saving costs on infrastructure and maintenance through decreasing the area that needs to be paved and the distance that utilizes need to be run
• To create more area for open space, recreation and more social interaction.
Benefits

• more preserved land for open/recreational space.
• a better setting for community building.
• optimal arrangement in storm water management.
• possible local agriculture production.
• makes more ecological and economical sense
Issues

• established zoning which restricts developers, planning boards and communities to only use this conventional subdivision development

• People’s perception of personal space has a large part to do with this resistance

• the issue of dealing with open, recreational, and agricultural space
Application

- The model ordinance for cluster development is section 4.7 in the Smart Growth Codes
- requisites are that all principle/ accessory uses are allowed and that multifamily dwelling, duplexes, townhouses are permitted
- And the application of maximal lot coverage, floor area ratios, building height, and parking requirements to the entire site as opposed to the individual lot.
• Provisions of a cluster development require that the site is at least 2 to 5 acres and there is no minimum to lot dimensions
• each house can be no more than 12 feet from the street with yard that is at least 25 feet
• There needs to be the ability to place more then one principle building on each lot, and lastly no less then 25% of the site is used for open space
• Application requires site plan is required to consist of the street/sidewalk layout.
• the maximum number and type of dwelling units proposed
• and how much area they will occupy
Design Features

• the consideration of natural features/topography
• smaller lot size
• the use of cul-de-sacs
• and certain waste/storm water management techniques
Examples

• Town house- Dudley Square, Shreveport, Louisiana
• Super Development- Reston and Crofton, Maryland
Dudley Square site plan.

Dudley Square townhouses.
Questions

comments…