

The Rural Resources Conservation Zone

The Rural Resources Conservation Zone applies to about 20 percent of Hamilton - the area that is located southeast of Rt. 130. The area was formerly zoned as single family residential with large lot requirements. The new zone permits single family houses, farms, public recreation and community center buildings and grounds, libraries, parks and playgrounds, government buildings, camps, churches, schools and more, but encourages preservation of large parcels of land.

There are several different options for single family housing that set specific densities (number of acres per house), actual lot sizes permitted, and use of non-developed land.

The Open Lands option permits 0.16 houses per developable acre (non-developable land would be wetlands, for example). For a 100 acre tract, the permitted density is 16 houses (assuming all 100 acres are developable). However, the actual lot size can be one acre. Further, in the Open Lands option, at least 75% of the tract "...shall be designated as open lands and shall be...deed restricted for agricultural or conservation use." The Open Lands option "...should seek to preserve those areas which exhibit sensitive environmental features...or which contain active or prime agricultural lands or forested areas." So there could be 15 houses on one acre each, plus one house on one 85 acre lot, which could be a farm.

Another option is called "lot size averaging." This option also permits 0.16 houses per developable acre. At least 75% of the lots must be one or two acres for this option to apply. Also, like the open lands option, individual lots can be as small as one acre. Design of housing "Should shift the more intensive development toward those lands that can best support installation of the dwelling, well, septic system and associated site improvements." and "Should seek to preserve those areas which exhibit sensitive environmental features...or which contain active or prime agricultural lands or forested areas."

A third option is the "conservation subdivision." The major distinction is that an additional dwelling is permitted beyond the 0.16 per developable acre. In return at least 65% of the entire tract must be deed restricted as open space meaning that it can be, "...used exclusively for recreational and/or agricultural and/or conservation use or conveyed to the Township as open space."

Other important RRC provisions are that lots cannot be subdivided again after the initial division. Also, there is a maximum impervious surface requirement in the ordinance.

Copies of all ordinances are available through the Hamilton Municipal Clerk's office. Older ordinances are online at www.hamiltonnj.com.