

Natural Space Residential District

Purpose and Intent

A Natural Space Residential District is a residential development in which dwellings are situated on the most developable portion of the site in exchange for the preservation of substantial amounts of well-maintained open or natural space for recreational, environmental, and ecological reasons. The purpose of this district is to provide a method of land development that permits variation in lot sizes without an increase in the overall density of population or development. This allows the subdivision of land into lots of varying sizes which will provide home buyers a choice of lot sizes according to their needs, while at the same time, preserving open space, tree cover, scenic vistas, natural drainage ways, and existing natural topography. Such measures prevent soil erosion and flooding by allowing development to occur according to the nature of the terrain; provide larger open areas with greater utility for rest and recreation; and encourage the development of more attractive and economical site design while preventing unnecessary sprawl. The developer, while still building the same number of homes, is able to reduce the environmental impact to the property and lower the cost to the consumer by reducing the amount of required sewer, roads, and other infrastructure. The resultant development benefits from the open, recreational, or natural space.

Natural Space Residential District General Provisions

Minimum Lot Area

There is no required minimum lot area per dwelling unit unless otherwise required by DHEC or local code.

Yard Requirements

There is no minimum lot width, except as required by DHEC and/or the applicable building code.

Natural Space Ownership, Restoration, and Maintenance

A. Ownership of Natural Space - The owner and developer, or subdivider, shall select land dedicated for natural space purposes and type of ownership. Type of ownership may include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. The Town, subject to acceptance by the governing body;
2. Other public jurisdictions or agencies, subject to their acceptance;
3. Non-profit or quasi-public organizations committed to the protection and conservation of natural space, subject to their acceptance;
4. Homeowner or cooperative associations or organizations; or
5. Shared, undivided interest by all property owners within the subdivision.

B. Obligation of restoration or maintenance to a natural space – Any natural space portion of the property which is developed or significantly disturbed by clearing, grading, site preparation, utility installation or other means which impact the natural character of the space must be well maintained for the duration of the ownership. The natural space shall be restored or maintained in a manner which allows it to blend into the rest of the natural space and owner shall make every reasonable and legally required effort to limit impacts to waterways or adjacent properties during development, maintenance, or restoration activities.

- C. Maintenance of natural space - The person(s) or entity identified above, as having the right to ownership or control over natural space, shall be responsible for its continuing upkeep and proper maintenance and any damages resulting from neglect of proper maintenance.
- D. Natural space easements - Prior to the recording of a subdivision final plat, an easement shall be placed on all lands and private waters used to satisfy the natural space requirements of the Natural Space Residential District. The easement shall be solely for the purpose of ensuring the land remains undeveloped and shall not, in any way, imply the right of public access or any other right or duty not expressly set forth by the terms of the easement. The easement shall run with the land, provide for protection in perpetuity, and be granted to the Homeowners Association, a Town-approved non-profit land trust, other qualified organization approved by the Town, or the Town, subject to its acceptance. The easement shall include a complete metes and bounds of the property being designated as natural space.
- E. Notes to be included on the final plat -
 - a. This development has been approved by the Planning Commission as a Natural Space Residential Development and has provided certain acreage of natural space.
 - b. Natural Space Easement. The removal of trees and natural vegetation is permitted in the development phases for the purpose of utility crossing easements, passive recreational uses, and drainage ways with the proper notations on the final plat. Neither the developer, property owners, or other subsequent contractors or builders shall be granted permission to remove or destroy trees or natural vegetation from the natural space area for passive recreational or other purposes without the express written permission of the Homeowners Association, other approved organization, or Town which has jurisdiction over the implementation and enforcement of the subdivision covenants provided that the proposed work is limited in scope and in keeping with the purpose and intent of the Natural Space Residential District. If some part of the natural space was designated to meet stormwater management requirements, permission must be obtained from the Town for any alteration of the designated natural space. Normal maintenance and the removal of dead or fallen trees are permitted and recommended.
 - c. The natural space for this development is protected by an easement that has been recorded at the Pickens County Register of Deeds Office (Instrument #) and as outlined in the Subdivision Covenants (Instrument #).
- F. Subdivision covenants - The covenants for the subdivision shall include provisions for the protection of trees and natural amenities within the property designated as natural space. A copy of the covenants is to be provided to the Town prior to the recording of the final plat.

Utilization Restrictions and Applicability of Other Standards

The Natural Space Residential District may only apply to land which is zoned as R-12 or R-20, or which has a pending annexation application for R-12 or R-20. All other requirements contained within the Town of Central Zoning Ordinance which are not specifically addressed in the Natural Space Residential District Ordinance shall apply.

Natural Space Residential Development

Minimum Areas

The minimum tract area for a natural space residential development shall be five (5) acres. The minimum area shall consist of contiguous parcels, not divided by an existing public or private road or a recreational or navigable body of water.

Required Buffers

A buffer of fifty (50) feet shall be required along all external lot lines of any Natural Space Residential development. This buffer shall be left undisturbed whenever possible with the exception of regular maintenance or removal of limited trees or vegetation for maintenance purposes. Undeveloped easements such as those for underground or overhead utilities may count towards the total required buffer along any external lot line.

Setback

No structures shall be erected within 50 feet from any external lot line of any Natural Space Residential District, otherwise no front, side, or rear setbacks are required for internal lots. Setbacks from existing roads will be consistent with the requirements outlined in the appropriate sections of Article X. ~~Front setbacks from existing roads will be consistent with the requirements outlined in the appropriate zoning district.~~

Parking

Adequate off-street parking for each dwelling shall be provided at a minimum ratio of two vehicles per dwelling. Parking of vehicles on the street on a routine basis shall not be permitted. Recreational vehicles, utility trailers, campers and boats shall not be parked in view of any public roadway.

Permitted Uses

- Single-family detached dwellings
- Single family zero lot line dwellings
- Single-family attached dwellings

Single-Family Attached

Single-Family attached dwellings are permitted subject to the following requirements.

- A. Any attached unit must be a townhouse and excludes condominiums.
- B. Any attached units must be contained within the development and not part of any exterior lot.
- C. Attached units may be a duplex, triplex, or quadraplex and shall not exceed more than four (4) attached units per structure.
- D. Attached units shall not be located on preexisting platted lots within a development.

Permitted Density

The overall number of dwellings allowed in a Natural Space development may be found in the below table. All densities are based on the total number of acres of the owned parcels, including the developed, undeveloped, open and natural space.

Minimum Lot Area Permitted and Permitted Densities for Residential Development		
Conventional Zoning		Cluster/Density Based Residential
District	Minimum Lot Size	Units per acre
R-12	12,000 sf	1.98
R-20	20,000 sf	1.8

Required Natural Space

In a Natural Space development, a minimum percentage of the total acreage must be designated as natural or open space. The required natural or open space may include both developable and undevelopable land as defined by common definitions but shall not include land within a required buffer. Not more than 50% of the required natural or open space may be used for active recreational purposes such as playgrounds, sports fields, or other formal recreational space. Except for paved walking trails not to exceed six (6) feet in width, these natural or open spaces may not contain impervious surfaces.

Land dedicated as natural or open space shall be of meaningful proportions and dimensions so as to be consistent with the purpose and intent of this section. The common open space shall be contiguous to the extent practicable. Land dedicated to common open space shall not include land dedicated for uses such as community swimming pool(s), clubhouse(s), and similar uses. Recreation lakes or ponds used for storm water management may be included in the land designated as natural or open space. Fenced detention or retention areas used for storm water management shall not be included in the calculation of required natural or open space.

Minimum Percentage of Required Natural or Open Space	
District	Minimum Percentage of Total Acreage
R-12	30%
R-20	30%

Riparian Buffer Zone

In an effort to balance protection of waterways in addition to natural land space and in recognition that streams, spring heads, rivers, ponds, lakes and other waters in the Town of Central are vital to the health, ecological preservation, safety and economic welfare of the Town, the following standards shall apply in a Natural Space Residential District:

- A. A Riparian Buffer Zone shall encompass all land within a minimum of sixty (60) feet on either side of all streams, springs, rivers, ponds, lakes and other waters that situate in or flow through the Town of Central, measured as a line extending perpendicularly from the bank of the waterway or the spring. The bank shall be identified, where observable, as the location at which there is a break in slope and

not the edge of the body of the water. Where such a break in slope is not observable, the edge of the water may be used.

- B. Within the Riparian Buffer Zone, the following activities shall not be permitted:
 - a. Construction or installation of any impervious surface including but not limited to buildings, structures, driveways, streets or roads, parking lots, or any other paved, hardened, or structural surface which does not allow for complete on-site infiltration of precipitation.
 - b. Land disturbing activity such as grading, scraping, excavation, filling of land, or clearing of vegetation or trees.
 - c. Storm water retention, detention, or facilities installation.
 - d. Allowing the deposit of excess sediment into the waterways of the Riparian Buffer Zone that originates from other portions of the District. Any deposits or resulting damage to the waterway shall be remediated.

Residential Landscape Standards

The purpose of the residential landscape standards are to serve as the minimum guidelines to create an aesthetically pleasing landscape and support functional and appropriate drainage of the development and to enhance the architecture of the home.

- A. Public Viewing Area (front of home and of side of homes that with dual street views): Planting beds along the foundation to have adequately sized plantings. One decorative tree at 6' – 8' height installed size, foundational coverage of evergreen shrubs that mature to 3' or larger (varieties to vary to provide textural differences), 1-5 deciduous plants, all areas of the ground to have coverage such as mulch, pine needles, or grass which can be seeded, preferable to be sod.
- B. Private Area (generally in the back of the home): all areas of the ground to have coverage such as mulch, pine needles, or grass which can be seeded, preferable to be sod.
- C. Service Area: HVAC units to be screened with one evergreen plant that matures over 3' in height or a solid wooden fence of 4' in height on 2 sides of the HVAC unit(s) or other outdoor utility appliances.
- D. Drainage: All developed lots of the district shall have positive water drainage to and along property lines as to not enter an adjacent property. French drains and/or dry creek beds may be used along property lines to manage water drainage from neighboring properties and lead clean water to a storm water catch basin or culvert pipe or retention pond. Excess drainage originating from a developed lot within the district which causes sediment washing, erosion, or drainage to an adjacent property or roadway shall be addressed and remediated so as to be in compliance with this section.