

CHAPTER 8 | SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

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CHAPTER 8 | SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS**ARTICLE 8.1 GENERAL****§8.1.1 PURPOSE**

The public health, safety, economy, good order, appearance, convenience, morals and general welfare require the harmonious, orderly, and progressive development of land within Charleston County. In furtherance of this general intent, the Subdivision Regulations are authorized for the following purposes, among others:

- A. To implement the goals, objectives and policies of the Charleston County *Comprehensive Plan*;
- B. To facilitate the adequate provision or availability of transportation, police and fire protection, water, sewage, schools, parks and other recreational facilities, affordable housing, disaster evacuation, and other public services and requirements;
- C. To assure the provision of needed public open spaces and building sites in new land developments through the dedication or reservation of land for recreational, educational, environmental, transportation, and other public purposes;
- D. To assure, in general, the wise and timely development of new areas and redevelopment of previously developed areas in harmony with the adopted or amended *Comprehensive Plan* for Charleston County and any adopted or amended municipal *Comprehensive Plan* within or adjacent to the County;
- E. To implement land use policies that will preserve agricultural uses of land and the rural character of unincorporated Charleston County;
- F. To identify, protect and preserve scenic, historic, and ecologically sensitive areas;
- G. To prevent overcrowding of land, avoiding undue concentration of population, and lessening congestion in the streets;
- H. To regulate the density and distribution of populations and the uses of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, agriculture, forestry, conservation, airports and approaches thereto, water supply, sanitation, individual onsite wastewater systems or off-site sewer lateral connection provided to each lot, protection against floods, public activities, and other purposes; and
- I. To ensure protection from fire, flood, and other dangers, and furthering the public welfare in any other regard specified by a local governing body.

§8.1.2 APPLICABILITY

Unless expressly exempted, no subdivision shall be made, platted, or recorded for any purpose nor shall parcels resulting from such subdivisions be sold, unless such subdivision meets all

applicable standards of this Ordinance and has been approved in accordance with the procedures of this Ordinance.

- A. All lots shown on plats whether subdivided or not, shall have the Planning Commission Stamp of either approval or exemption on said plat; the Register of Mesne Conveyance shall not record any plat without such stamp. The plat for an individual lot exempted by virtue of pre-existence must be accompanied by a surveyor's statement on the plat that the lot is a single, individual lot, and not newly created.
- B. Parcels that were recorded by deed or plat prior to the adoption of the County's original Subdivision Regulations on January 1, 1955, will receive automatic approval under a Grandfather Clause, provided the parcel involved is still in the same size and shape as when recorded prior to 1955 and is properly platted in accordance with present standards. The recorded information must be provided and attested to by the surveyor or attorney involved.
- C. Preliminary Plats submitted for approval shall expire two years from the date of preliminary approval if all conditions for preliminary plat approval have not been met. The Planning Director shall be authorized to grant a one-time extension of this time frame if a written request is submitted by the applicant prior to the expiration date. The time period of the extension shall not exceed one year.
- D. Upon submission of a Subdivision application, no additional Subdivision applications shall be accepted for the subject property until the original application has been withdrawn or the Decision-Making Body has rendered its final decision and all applicable time limits on refilling have expired.

§8.1.3 EXEMPTIONS

A. Procedures

The following shall be exempt from the Subdivision Plat Procedures, if the Planning Director determines that all engineering and survey standards of this Ordinance have been met:

1. The combination or re-combination of portions of previously platted lots where the total number of lots is not increased. When the plat is finalized, it shall be submitted to the Planning Director for recording. Deeds and plats shall be recorded simultaneously.
2. The public acquisition of land for right-of-way or drainage easements or any lot or parcel created therefrom.
3. Contiguous properties that are to be divided for the purpose of exchanging or trading parcels of land. When the plat is finalized, it shall be submitted to the Planning Director for recording. Deeds and plats shall be recorded simultaneously.

4. A parcel of land that is proposed to be used as the site for a utility substation, power line easements or right-of-way, pumping station, pressure regulating station, electricity regulating substation, gas pressure control station, or similar facilities.
5. The combination or recombination of entire lots of record where no new street or change in existing streets is involved.
6. The division of land into parcels of five acres or more, where no new street or easement is involved. Plats of these exceptions must be received as information by the Planning Director, which fact shall be indicated on the plats.

B. Standards

Lots created and recorded prior to August 15, 1971, shall be exempt from compliance with the standards of this Chapter, provided that the subject property:

1. Was or is surveyed and platted in accordance with prescribed standards;
2. Has the approval of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental control (DHEC); and
3. Contains no drainage ways or easements needed to drain surrounding properties, as determined by the Public Works Director.

§8.1.4 CHARLESTON COUNTY ROAD CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

The regulations and standards of this Chapter are intended to supplement the Charleston County Road Construction Standards, as amended, in Appendix A of this Ordinance, which shall be considered the minimum design standards for roads and drainage systems in Charleston County. (Note: Road and drainage systems not meeting the Standard Specifications for Local Governments' Road and Street Construction will not be eligible for maintenance from the State "C" or donor County funds.)

§8.1.5 RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES OF ARTICLE 3.1

The "General" procedural requirements and standards of Article 3.1 of this Ordinance shall apply to the subdivision plat procedures of this Chapter.

§8.1.6 SURVEY COMPLIANCE

All Land Surveys in the County shall be in accord with the land use designated for the proposed subdivision of property and the criteria specified in Urban Land Surveys as promulgated by the South Carolina Code of Regulations, 1991, Chapter 49, Article 3, R.400-490, as amended, and described as the "Minimum Standards Manual for the Practice of Land Surveying in South Carolina."

ARTICLE 8.2 PRE-APPLICATION INFORMATION**§8.2.1 PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE**

Pre-Application Conferences offer an opportunity for Planning, Public Works and other affected agencies to familiarize applicants with applicable procedures, submittal requirements, development standards, and other pertinent matters before finalizing the development proposal or laying out the proposed subdivision. Applicants requesting Minor Subdivisions are suggested to schedule a pre-application process before submittal of an application. Applicants for Major Subdivisions are required to have a pre-application conference before submittal of an application. Applicants shall be responsible for scheduling pre-application conferences with the Planning Director who shall be responsible for contacting the Public Works Director and other affected agencies.

ARTICLE 8.3 MINOR AND MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS**§8.3.1 MINOR SUBDIVISION**

A Minor Subdivision is a division of any tract of land into ten (10) or fewer lots, provided that:

- A. No public street right-of-way dedications are involved;
- B. The Public Works Director does not require a Preliminary Plat for a drainage easement;
- C. The lots meet South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) requirements for sewage disposal systems. Systems that are determined by DHEC to be properly functioning or "grandfathered" must comply with DHEC regulations as a condition of minor subdivision approval;
- D. Off-site sewage disposal systems must be approved by DHEC and/or the Public provider and an off-site utility easement must be shown along with all lots served by the off-site system if public sewer is (accessible and is provided to each lot) provided, then sewer lateral connection will be provided to each lot.
- E. No new or residual parcels will be created that do not comply with all applicable requirements of this Ordinance; and
- F. The tract to be subdivided is not located within an approved planned development or an area that is subject to an application for planned development approval by the landowner. All such subdivisions are considered Major Subdivisions.
- G. Non-Buildable Lots
 1. For the purpose of this subsection, non-buildable lots are lots that meet all requirements of this Ordinance, with the exception of water and/or sewer availability requirements;

2. For all non-buildable lots, all new parcels being created less than five (5) acres in size shall meet the minimum lot size and comply with applicable requirements of this Ordinance;
3. Non-buildable lots may be approved by the Planning Commission as a Minor Subdivision ten (10) lots or less without certification by DHEC for on-site waste disposal systems and water or where public water and sewer is not available;
4. The property owner(s) shall sign the "Certification of Non-Evaluation." This certification statement shall be placed on the plat and signed by the property owner(s);
5. The property owner(s) shall have a deed prepared by an attorney for each non-buildable lot less than five (5) acres in size explaining the "Certification of Non-Evaluation" to be recorded with the plat;
6. The "Certification of Non-Evaluation" for water and sewer availability shall be used in conjunction with Minor Subdivision (development) plats when no evaluation regarding the availability of public water/sewer or on-site septic systems and water have been approved; and
7. The following certification shall be placed on the plat and deed and signed by the property owners:

"The Property owner(s) of record hereby acknowledge(s) that the surveyed parcel(s) and/or tract remainder has not been approved to determine the availability of on-site waste disposal systems or provisions of public water/sewer services. Recordation of this plat and deed shall not be an implied or expressed consent of Charleston County that the lots or other land divisions shown hereon are capable of being serviced by on-site waste disposal or public water/sewer systems. Unless otherwise stated hereon, all surveyed parcels and/or tract remainders have not been reviewed for on-site waste disposal systems or public water/sewer services."

Property Owner(s) Signature _____
Date _____

- H. Lots of Record, Approved located within any 208 Water Quality Management Designation within the Urban/Suburban Area of the County:
1. One (1) lot may be subdivided from a Lot of Record, Approved ("Approved Lot") without installing additional lateral lines, provided that the development complies with all other requirements of this Ordinance, when public water and/or sewer lateral lines are provided to the Approved Lot, and the Approved Lot is located within a 208 Water Quality Management Designation area within the Urban/Suburban Area of the County.

2. The property owner(s) shall sign a Certification Statement that there are no physical lateral connections provided to the new lot being created. The Certification shall be placed on the subdivision plat and signed by each property owner.
3. The following Certification Statement shall be placed on the plat and signed by the property owner(s):

“The property owner(s) of record hereby acknowledge(s) that the surveyed parcel has not been served by a lateral connection of public water/sewer lines. Recordation of this plat shall not be an implied or expressed consent of Charleston County and/or the public provider of the water and/or sewer or other omitted public improvement that the lot or other land divisions shown here on are capable of being serviced by on-site waste water disposal or public water/sewer systems.”

Property Owner(s) Signature: _____

Date: _____

Lot Description: _____

4. At the time of seeking a zoning or building permit the property owner(s) shall supply a document of certification from the Public provider that public water and sewer lateral connections are provided to the lot.
5. All lots created will comply with the density/intensity and dimensional standards for lots without public sewer/water, as there is no guarantee that these public improvements will be available.

§8.3.2 MINOR SUBDIVISION PROCESS

Applications for Minor Subdivisions shall be submitted to the Planning Director on forms available in the Planning Department. There is one required step in the Minor Subdivision process which is Final Plat review and approval. Generally, Minor Subdivisions are reviewed in the Planning Department and approved by the Planning Director. However, the Planning Director may send Minor Subdivision applications to the Planning Commission for approval in order to determine whether or not the proposed subdivision is consistent with the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Applicants for Minor Subdivisions are strongly encouraged to schedule and attend a Pre-Application Conference prior to filing a minor subdivision.

§8.3.3 MAJOR SUBDIVISION

- A. Any land division that is not a Minor Subdivision shall be processed as a "Major Subdivision." All Major Subdivision applicants are required to attend a Pre-Application Conference.
- B. Subdivision Roads and Utilities
A Zoning Permit is required for grading, drainage, or the construction of roads and utilities in a subdivision.

§8.3.4 MAJOR SUBDIVISION PROCESS

Applicants for Major Subdivisions are required to schedule and attend a Pre-Application Conference prior to filing a Major Subdivision application. After the Pre-Application Conference, there are three required steps in the process: (1) Preliminary Plat review and approval; (2) Final Plat review and approval; and (3) Letters of Coordination. Each step of the process shall be completed before initiating the next step. Applications for Major Subdivisions shall be submitted to the Planning Director and shall include a completed application form (available from the Planning Department). Additional components for consideration of a Major Subdivision that are necessary at the Pre-Application Conference are:

- A. A plat, or survey of the subject property, if available, or a tax map that identifies the subject property; and
- B. A Concept Plan that includes the following information:
 - 1. The proposed means of access to a public road;
 - 2. Surrounding land uses;
 - 3. All adjacent roads;
 - 4. A preliminary map and analysis of natural resources present on the subject property and surrounding property; and
 - 5. A conceptual layout of the proposed subdivision, which shall be overlaid on the preliminary site analysis and which shall show streets, drainage, lots, parks and other facilities located to protect natural resource areas.

[Commentary: Approval from other local, state or federal agencies may be necessary in the development of land in Charleston County, particularly in regard to environmental concerns. Pre-application conferences should be held with these agencies, including the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Coastal Resources Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.]

§8.3.5 REQUIRED TREE PROTECTION FOR MINOR AND MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS

Trees shall be protected in accordance with Chapter 9 of this Ordinance.

§8.3.6 LETTERS OF COORDINATION FOR MAJOR AND MINOR SUBDIVISIONS

Letters of coordination are required that acknowledge that the County and other agencies will be able to provide necessary public services, facilities and programs to service the development proposed, at the time the subdivision plat is processed.

ARTICLE 8.4 PRELIMINARY PLAT

§8.4.1 APPLICABILITY

Preliminary Plats shall be required for all Major Subdivisions.

§8.4.2 APPLICATION

A. Requirements

The following shall be submitted:

1. Completed applications for Preliminary Plat approval shall be submitted to the Planning Director on forms available in the Planning Department. Ten (10) copies of the Preliminary Plat shall be filed with the application.
2. Preliminary Plats shall be drawn to engineer's scale no smaller than one inch equals 200 feet. Where large areas are being platted, they may be drawn on one or more sheets, 22 inches by 34 inches in size. For small areas being platted, a scale of one inch equals 100 feet shall be used.
3. Even if the applicant intends to subdivide only a portion of a parcel or tract of land initially, the Preliminary Plat shall show a proposed street and lot layout, drainage plan and other requirements for the entire parcel or tract of land in which such portion is contained; except that the Planning Director, with the recommendation of the Public Works Director, may waive this requirement on a finding that such a complete layout is not necessary to carry out the purposes of these regulations.
4. The following information shall be required on each plat:
 - a. The courses and distances of the perimeter of the land involved shall be indicated on the plat shown with all courses marked to show which are actual field observations and which are computed.
 - b. References to a known point or points such as street intersections and railroad crossings shall be shown.
 - c. The total acreage of the land involved in the subdivision, and the acreage of high land above the Office of Coastal Resource Management Critical Line. Date of Critical Line certification shall be indicated. (Aerial photography may not be used to determine OCRM Critical Line location.)
 - d. The names of adjacent land owners and streets where known or available shall be given (with the tax parcel numbers), and all intersecting boundaries or property lines shall be shown.
 - e. Proposed divisions to be created shall be shown, including building envelopes for each lot, right-of-way widths, roadway widths, road surface types, sidewalks (if applicable), proposed drainage easements, and names of streets; the locations of proposed utility installations and utility easements; lot lines, dimensions and angles; sites reserved or dedicated for public uses; and sites for apartments, civic/institutional, commercial and industrial uses. The status of the existing lot access and the concept of the type of road construction being proposed shall be indicated (e.g., Ingress/Egress Easement, Private Road constructed or unconstructed, Public Secondary or Primary Rural Road, Public Secondary or Primary County Road, and other details as appropriate; i.e., curb and gutter, asphalt swales, inverted crown, roadside open ditch, etc.).

- f. The title, scale (including graphic scale), north arrow (magnetic, grid, or true), date, name of applicant and the name and seal of engineer or surveyor with South Carolina Registration Number shall be shown.
- g. All existing structures and physical features of the land, including contours (contours not required on proposed private subdivisions, and only within the rights-of-way of proposed rural public streets), drainage ditches, roads and wooded areas shall be shown. The contour interval shall be one foot, unless otherwise approved in advance of submission by the Public Works Director. All contour information shall be based on mean sea level datum and shall be accurate within one-half foot. The Bench Mark, with its description, and the datum used for the survey shall be clearly noted on the plat.
- h. General drainage features, including proposed drainage easements and detention/retention basins. Also the proposed direction of drainage on each street, ditch and lot shall be indicated by the use of arrows and proposed street names.
- i. The location of required landscape buffers as specified in Chapter 9 of this Ordinance, which shall not be located within drainage easements unless expressly approved by the Public Works Director.
- j. At a minimum, a United States Army Corps of Engineers Approximate-Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination Letter is required for lots of five acres or less in size and within all publicly dedicated rights-of-ways and easements.
- k. A notation shall be made on the plat clearly indicating the applicable OCRM Critical Line buffers and setbacks.
- l. Tree Surveys on lots of one acre or less are to include Grand Trees on the entire lot. Tree surveys of Grand Trees may be requested upon site inspection if lots greater than one acre appear to be unbuildable due to the presence of Grand Trees.
- m. Tree Surveys of all Grand Trees are required within access easements, drainage easements, and rights-of-way.
- n. A signature block on the plat, signed by the owner(s) of the property and notarized indicating that the proposed preliminary plat being put forth is an action of the owner, heirs thereto or assigns.
- o. A vacant block shall be provided on each page of the plat that is three inches by eight inches in dimension for Charleston County approval stamps and notations.
- p. A statement that any easements for utilities or other encroachments in the area to be dedicated for streets, highways, drainage or other public or private use are subject to binding provision that the costs

of future relocation of any such encroachments due to the construction or maintenance of public improvements shall be borne by the holder of the easement and/or utility company.

5. Accompanying Data

- a. The Preliminary Plat shall be accompanied by a statement as to the availability of and specific indication of the distance to and location of the nearest public water supply and public sanitary sewers.
- b. The Preliminary Plat shall be accompanied by a statement indicating what provisions are to be made for water supply and sewage disposal.
- c. Proposed subdivisions encompassing 100 or more acres of land area shall provide a master plan showing the general layout of future development of the entire tract and on adjacent lands that are under common ownership or control. This master plan shall provide a generalized description and plan that addresses the following future development considerations: traffic circulation, drainage, environmental preservation, utility placement, land use, density and any areas that are to remain undeveloped.
- d. The engineer and/or surveyor who prepared the Preliminary Plat shall affix their seal(s), name(s), and South Carolina Registration Number(s). Only engineers or surveyors registered in the State of South Carolina shall attest and fix their seal on the Preliminary Plat.

[Commentary—For the purpose of Preliminary Plat applications, a complete application means one that includes all required information and fees and that addresses the findings of the inspection report and has received all approvals from other agencies that are a prerequisite to Preliminary Plat approval.]

§8.4.3 PLANNING DIRECTOR---- REVIEW AND REPORT

- A. Upon receipt of a complete application for Preliminary Plat, approval, the Planning Director shall have 30 calendar days to (1) review the proposed Preliminary Plat; (2) compile a staff report on the proposed plat (which includes the comments and recommendations of the Public Works Director and other affected agencies);
- B. Major Subdivisions (Preliminary and Final) are reviewed by the Planning Director and approved when in compliance with requirements of this Chapter. Within the 30 calendar day review period the Planning Director has the option of forwarding the Major Preliminary Subdivision Plat application, along with his report and any recommendations, to the Planning Commission for its review and approval in order to determine whether or not the proposed Subdivision is in compliance with all of the requirements of this Chapter.
- C. The Planning Director shall advise the Planning Commission at the regular scheduled Planning Commission meeting of all Preliminary Plats approved (for information purposes only).

§8.4.4 PLANNING COMMISSION—REVIEW AND DECISION

Within 30 calendar days of receipt of a report from the Planning Director, the Planning Commission shall review the proposed Preliminary Plat and act to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the Preliminary Plat based on whether it complies with all applicable requirements of this Ordinance and the adopted Charleston County *Comprehensive Plan*.

§8.4.5 EFFECT OF PRELIMINARY PLAT APPROVAL

Approval of a Preliminary Plat shall constitute general acceptance of the overall planning concepts for the proposed subdivision and is a prerequisite for the filing of a Final Plat application.

§8.4.6 LAPSE OF PRELIMINARY PLAT APPROVAL

An approved Preliminary Plat shall lapse and be of no further force and effect if a Final Plat for the subdivision (or a phase of the subdivision) has not been approved within two years of the date of approval of the Preliminary Plat. If the subdivision is to be developed in phases, a phasing plan, including a timetable for development of the entire subdivision, shall be approved as part of the Preliminary Plat approval. No final plats shall be accepted and no construction shall be allowed for any phase not approved as part of the Preliminary Plat.

§8.4.7 APPEALS OF PLANNING DIRECTOR'S PRELIMINARY PLAT DECISION

Any Party in Interest in a Preliminary Plat decision of the Planning Director regarding a complete or incomplete application may appeal the decision to the Planning Commission by filing an appeal with the Planning Director within 30 calendar days of the date of the decision.

A. Appeal Powers

In exercising its appeal power the Planning Commission may reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify the decision on appeal. In acting upon the appeal the Planning Commission shall be authorized only to determine whether the decision of the Planning Director was made in error. The Planning Commission shall not be authorized to approve modifications or waivers of Ordinance standards through the appeal process. If the Planning Commission determines that it is necessary to obtain additional evidence in order to resolve the matter it may remand the matter to the Planning Director with directions to obtain such evidence and to reconsider the decision in light of such evidence.

B. Consideration of Evidence

The decision of the Planning Commission shall be a matter of record; it shall consider only the same application, plans, and related project materials that were the subject of the original decision and only the issues raised by the appeal.

C. Burden of Persuasion of Error

In acting on the appeal, the Planning Commission shall grant to the decision of the Planning Director a presumption of correctness, placing the burden of persuasion of error on the appellant.

D. Approval Criteria

An appeal shall be sustained only if the Planning Commission finds that the decision of the Planning Director was in error.

E. Vote Required

A quorum of the Planning Commission shall be achieved when the number of members in attendance equals more than one-half of its total membership. At least two-thirds of the members present and voting shall be required to reverse a final plat decision of the Planning Director.

[Commentary—Appeals of Planning Director and other subdivision-related administrative decisions [including decisions to reject applications as incomplete], shall be processed in accordance with Article 3.14 described in Chapter 3.]

§8.4.8 APPEALS OF PLANNING COMMISSION PRELIMINARY PLAT DECISION

Any party in interest in a Preliminary Plat decision of the Planning Commission or any officer, board, or bureau of the County may appeal the Planning Commission decision to the Circuit Court of Charleston County. Appellants shall file with the Court Clerk a written petition plainly and fully setting forth how such decision is contrary to law. Such appeal shall be filed within 30 calendar days after actual written notice of the Planning Commission's decision.

§8.4.9 CONSTRUCTION PLANS

After approval of a Preliminary Plat and before commencing any work within the proposed subdivision (including land clearing and grading), road and drainage plans prepared by an engineer registered in the State of South Carolina shall be submitted to the Public Works Director for review and approval in accordance with the Charleston County Road Construction Standards in Appendix A of this Ordinance.

§8.4.10 INSPECTIONS

- A. Subdivision plats that are submitted for review are field inspected by Planning and Public Works staff to ensure compliance with any applicable Ordinance requirements and County standards.
- B. Prior to submitting a Preliminary Plat where no public sewer is provided to any proposed lot, the applicant shall contact a representative of South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and arrange for a test of the soil on any proposed lot. DHEC staff will inspect the proposed lot(s) in order to identify areas that meet minimum septic system requirements required by the State of South Carolina. The results of this test shall be submitted by the applicant at the time of the Preliminary Plat application.
- C. Where subdivision streets and/or drainageways are being constructed, the Public Works Director or the authorized representative will make periodic visits to the site as indicated in Charleston County Road Construction Standards, Appendix A, to ensure construction compliance with County-approved road and drainage plans. The Public Works Director's or the authorized representative's certification that all roads and drainage systems have been constructed in compliance with the plans is required prior to final approval of the development. This approval is only necessary for public subdivisions.

§8.4.11 CONDITIONAL PLAT APPROVAL

- A. Prior to approval of a Final Plat, the developer shall install all required public improvements or post an approved financial guarantee of performance, in

accordance with the requirements of this Ordinance. If financial guarantees are posted, the Planning Director shall be authorized to grant conditional plat approval on plats that involve two (2) or more guaranteed public improvements, with final approval contingent upon completion and acceptance of all required improvements. No Certificates of Occupancy shall be issued until all required improvements have been installed and accepted, and the Final Plat has been recorded by the Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance. Conditional Plat approval shall be valid for a period not to exceed two years from the date Conditional Plat Approval is granted.

- B. Where plats are submitted under an approved financial guarantee for Conditional approval the following three (3) notes shall be placed on the plat;
1. Approval of this plat does not authorize occupancy;
 2. Duration of approval shall be limited to two (2) years; and
 3. The approval of this plat in no way obligates the County of Charleston to accept for continued maintenance any of the roads or easements shown hereon.
- C. The duration of the financial guarantee for a conditional plat shall be no longer than twenty-four (24) months unless extended by the Planning Commission. No later than two (2) months before the expiration, the applicant shall notify the County that the applicant has completed the final plat or is securing a replacement bond to be issued within 30 days of expiration of the original bond. If no action is taken by the applicant, the County shall execute the provisions of the performance bond.

ARTICLE 8.5 FINAL PLATS

§8.5.1 APPLICABILITY

Final Plats shall be required for all Subdivisions.

§8.5.2 APPLICATION

A. Final Plat Applications Requirements:

1. Applications for Final Plat approval shall be submitted to Planning Director on forms available in the Planning Department. Ten (10) copies of the Final Plat shall be filed with the application.
2. Written certification from the design engineer that the subdivision's road and drainage infrastructure and any other required improvements have been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.
3. The Final Plat shall be drawn in ink on a material specified by the Register of Mesne Conveyance for recording, on sheets 22 inches by 34 inches in size, and at an engineer's scale of one inch equals 100 feet or larger. Where necessary the plat may be on several sheets accompanied

by an index sheet or key map insert showing the entire subdivision. Where necessary, the size of the plat may be adjusted to a smaller scale than 1"=100' with the approval of the Planning Director.

B. The Final Plat Shall Show the Following:

1. All proposed divisions of land shall be shown, including: each lot showing lot lines, with bearings and distances; all rights-of-way; all drainage easements; names of all streets; the locations of all utility rights-of-way and utility easements; all structures; and all sites reserved or dedicated for public uses.
2. The title, scale (including graphic scale), north arrow (magnetic, grid, or true), date, name of applicant and the name of engineer or surveyor with South Carolina Registration Number shall be shown.
3. Block and lot numbers suitably arranged by simple system.
4. The full names of adjacent land owners and streets where known or available shall be given (with the tax parcel numbers), and all intersecting boundaries or property lines shall be shown. Names of adjacent property owners may be omitted in established residential platted subdivisions; however, Legal Block and Lot Numbers and County Parcel ID Numbers are required.
5. Certificates:
 - a. The signature and seal of the registered land surveyor in accordance with the current Minimum Standard Manual for the Practice of Land Surveying in South Carolina.
 - b. A statement of dedication by the property owner of streets, rights-of-way, easements, and any other sites for public or private use and warranty of title of property offered for dedication. If any change in ownership is made subsequent to the submission of the plat and prior to the granting of final approval, the statement of dedication shall be corrected accordingly.
 - c. For any public dedication, a warranty deed for the transfer of the right(s)-of-way(s), easement(s), or other sites for public use to the County on legal documents of the form suitable to the County must be provided.
 - d. A statement that any easements for utilities or other encroachments in the area to be dedicated for streets, highways, drainage or other public or private use are subject to a binding provision that the costs of future relocation of any such encroachments due to the construction or maintenance of public improvements shall be borne by the holder of the easement and/or utility company.

6. All easements shall include their location, width and centerline.
7. The approved Office of Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) Critical Line with signed approval statement on the final plat.
8. At the Planning Director's discretion, the applicant/surveyor may be required to show buffers and setbacks on lots less than one acre in size or on newly created lots that may appear to have encroachment of structures into a buffer or setback.
9. At a minimum, a United States Army Corps of Engineers Approximate-Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination Letter is required for lots of five acres or less in size and within all publicly dedicated rights-of-ways and easements.
10. High land acreage and low land acreage (Freshwater Wetlands or acreage below the Office of Coastal Resource Management Critical Line).
11. Tree Surveys on lots of one acre or less are to include Grand Trees on the entire lot. Tree Surveys of Grand Trees may be requested upon site inspection if lots greater than one acre appear to be unbuildable due to the presence of Grand Trees.
12. Tree Surveys of all Grand Trees are required within access easements, drainage easements, and rights-of-way.
13. Ownership and maintenance status of the lot access shall be indicated for any newly-created lots.
14. A vacant block shall be provided on each page of the plat that is three inches by eight inches in dimension for Charleston County approval stamps and notations.

C. Accompanying Data

1. A certificate of title or a sworn affidavit establishing the ownership of the land to be recorded. If any change in ownership occurs subsequent to the date of the certificate of title or affidavit and prior to the granting of final approval, a new certificate of title or sworn affidavit establishing the ownership of the land shall be submitted to the Planning Director.
2. In subdivisions where existing public water and public sewer systems have been extended and/or a new system installed, a certification of inspection and associated operating permits from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) shall be submitted.
3. Restrictive covenants affidavit(s) signed by the applicant or current property owner(s) in compliance with State law.
4. Should the Landowner/Developer decide to utilize Article A.2, Private

Road Standards, of Appendix A, the following five (5) notes shall be placed on the plat:

- a. Any future subdivision of this parcel, or road construction or extension of the existing roads shown hereon shall require compliance with the Charleston County Ordinances. Before Charleston County will consider acceptance of any dedication of roads into the County road system, the property owner(s) shall construct the roads to County of Charleston Road Construction Standards;
 - b. It is hereby expressly understood by the property owner, developer or any subsequent purchaser of any lots shown on the plat that the County of Charleston is not responsible for the maintenance of the streets, roads, common areas, drainage systems and any other municipal services which include, but are not limited to, garbage disposal, public sewage, fire protection or emergency medical service;
 - c. Be aware that the County of Charleston is not responsible for drainage and flooding problems relevant to the real property, and that emergency vehicles may have difficulty accessing the property;
 - d. No public funds shall be used for the maintenance of the roads shown on the plat; and
 - e. This approval in no way obligates the County of Charleston to maintain the 50 foot right-of-way until it has been constructed to County standards and accepted for maintenance by Charleston County Council.
5. Letters of Coordination
Letters of Coordination are required which acknowledge that the County and other agencies will be able to provide necessary public services, facilities, and programs to service the development proposed, at the time the subdivision plat is processed.

D. Certification of Approval

When the Planning Director has approved the plat, a certificate noting such approval and carrying the signature of the Planning Director shall be placed on the original drawing of said plat.

§8.5.3 PLANNING DIRECTOR—REVIEW AND DECISION

Within 45 days of receipt of a complete Final Plat application, the Planning Director shall review the proposed Final Plat and the reports from the Public Works Director and other affected agencies and act to approve, approve with conditions or deny the Final Plat, based on whether it complies with the approved Preliminary Plat, all applicable requirements of this Ordinance, and the purposes and intent of Article 1.5.

§8.5.4 ACCEPTANCE OF DEDICATIONS

Approval of a Final Plat shall not constitute acceptance of any public improvements. Such

acceptance will require County Council acceptance of dedication.

Documents or instruments granting easements within the area to be dedicated must provide that:

- A. Future relocation or replacement costs of any encroachments, including, but not limited to utilities, due to maintenance or construction of public improvements, is to be borne solely by the easement holder/utility company; and
- B. The County will not be responsible for costs relating to future relocation or replacement of utilities or other encroachments made necessary by maintenance and/or construction of public improvements; and
- C. All expenses pertaining to said relocation shall be paid for by the easement holder/utility company; and
- D. Relocation shall be completed within 90 days from receipt of written request by the County or as otherwise agreed to by the County.

§8.5.5 RECORDING

Approved Final Plats shall be recorded by the Planning Director with the Register of Mesne Conveyance within 30 days of final approval. Notice to the applicant shall be sent within a reasonable time following the date of the recording with the Register of Mesne Conveyance.

§8.5.6 APPEALS OF PLANNING DIRECTOR'S FINAL PLAT DECISION

Any person with a substantial interest in a Final Plat decision of the Planning Director may appeal the decision to the Planning Commission by filing an appeal with the Planning Director within 30 calendar days after the actual notice of the decision.

A. Appeal Powers

In exercising the appeal power, the Planning Commission may reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify the decision being appealed. In acting upon the appeal, the Planning Commission shall be authorized only to determine whether the decision of the Planning Director was made in error. The Planning Commission shall not be authorized to approve modifications or waivers of Ordinance standards through the appeal process. If the Planning Commission determines that it is necessary to obtain additional evidence in order to resolve the matter, it may remand the matter to the Planning Director, with directions to obtain such evidence and to reconsider the decision in light of such evidence.

B. Consideration of Evidence

The Planning Commission's decision shall be on the record; it shall consider only the same application, plans, and related project materials that were the subject of the original decision and only the issues raised by the appeal.

C. Burden of Persuasion or Error

In acting on the appeal, the Planning Commission shall grant to the Planning Director's decision a presumption of correctness, placing the burden of persuasion of error on the appellant.

- D. Approval Criteria**
An appeal shall be sustained only if the Planning Commission finds that the Planning Director erred.
- E. Vote Required**
A quorum of the Planning Commission shall be achieved when the number of members in attendance equals more than one-half of the total membership of the Planning Commission. At least two-thirds of the members present and voting shall be required to reverse a final plat decision of the Planning Director.

[Commentary—Appeals of Planning Director and other subdivision-related administrative decisions (including decisions to reject applications as incomplete), shall be processed in accordance with Article 3.14 described in Chapter 3.]

§8.5.7 APPEALS OF PLANNING COMMISSION'S DECISION

- A. Any person with a substantial interest in a Final Plat (appeal) decision of the Planning Commission may appeal the Planning Commission decision to the Circuit Court of Charleston County. Appellants shall file with the Court Clerk a written petition plainly and fully setting forth how such decision is contrary to law. Such appeal shall be filed within 30 calendar days after actual notice of the Planning Commission's decision.
- B. At any time prior to appeal of a Planning Commission decision on a Final Plat (appeal) decision, the applicant may request that the Planning Commission enter mediation. When mediation is requested, the Planning Commission shall assign one of its members as a representative in mediation proceedings. A vote of the Planning Commission in a public meeting shall be required to accept any mediated settlement. An accepted mediated settlement cannot waive the standards of this Ordinance. Prior to beginning talks, applicable time limits for review and action on complete applications must be extended by mutual agreement of the applicant and Planning Commission.

ARTICLE 8.6 MARKERS

§8.6.1 PLACEMENT

A marker shall be set on the right-of-way line at the ends of the block for every block length of street. When blocks occur that have a curve or curves in them, markers shall be set on both sides of the street at the ends of tangents. Markers shall also be set on right-of-way lines (on each side of the centerline) at angle points when curves are not used. All interior lot corners shall be marked. The location and type of markers used shall be indicated on the Final Plat.

§8.6.2 TIMING

Markers shall be installed prior to the submission of and approval of the Final Plat.

ARTICLE 8.7 LOTS

§8.7.1 LAYOUT AND DESIGN GENERALLY

Lots shall be laid out and designed to provide buildable area on each lot, while complying with all other standards and requirements of this Ordinance.

§8.7.2 SIZE

- A. Lots shall comply with the lot area standards of the underlying zoning district and all other applicable standards of this Ordinance.
- B. Depth of residential lots shall not exceed five times the width of the lot (a 1:5 ratio).
- C. The Planning Director may allow the lot width to depth ratio of 1:5 to be exceeded when any of the following conditions occur:
 - 1. When attached dwellings are proposed;
 - 2. Where additional depth is provided for marsh frontage lots when the lot width depth ratio is met and the property line is extended into the marsh or the property is bisected by or fronts on freshwater wetlands;
 - 3. A Minor Subdivision of a parent tract, provided the following requirements are met:
 - a. The minimum lot frontage for each lot is not less than 250 feet;
 - b. In no case shall the average lot width be less than 250 feet with the minimum lot width at any one point less than 200 feet;
 - c. The property to be subdivided is located in an RM, AG-15, AG-10 or AG-8 Zoning District; or
 - 4. All of the following criteria are met:
 - a. The parcel meets all their requirements of this Ordinance;
 - b. The parcel is a lot of record;
 - c. The parcel is in a rural or agricultural zoning district;
 - d. The parcel is greater than 1 acre in size; and
 - e. The applicant has submitted to staff a complete subdivision application and approval from SCDHEC for water and wastewater compliance prior to applying for this exemption.
- D. Prescribed lot width requirements shall be for at least two-thirds of the depth of the lot.

§8.7.3 ACCESS

- A. Double-frontage lots shall be avoided except where essential to provide separation of residential development from major roadways or to overcome

specific disadvantages of topography and orientation. An easement with a minimum width of ten feet may be required to restrict access from the major street or other area.

- B. All lots shall be provided with a means of access in conformance with the standards and specifications of this Ordinance.
- C. All flag lots, cul-de-sac lots and privately accessed lots shall comply with the International Fire Code, as adopted by County Council.

§8.7.4 FLAG LOTS

The Planning Director shall be authorized to allow the use of flag lots only when the Planning Director determines that such lot configurations are necessary to address development constraints that are present on the site (e.g., lot width or wetland issues).

A. Permitted Use of Flag Lots

Flag lots may be authorized when the Planning Director determines that they will:

1. Facilitate subdivision of a long narrow parcel that has sufficient area but insufficient width to be otherwise subdivided.
2. Eliminate multiple access points to collector or arterial roads.
3. Allow reasonable development when the buildable area of a parcel is restricted due to the presence of a natural resource or the irregular shape of a parcel.

B. Prohibited Use of Flag Lots

1. Flag lots shall not be used to avoid the development of streets otherwise required by this Ordinance when the effect of such flag lots would be to increase the number of access points (driveways) on a publicly dedicated road right-of-way.
2. Flag lots may be denied when an adjoining parcel also has sufficient area but insufficient width to otherwise be subdivided. In such cases, platting can be accomplished by land owners of adjoining parcels joining together to provide a full width right-of-way and road section.

C. Standards For Flag Lots

1. Flag lots shall take direct access to streets that comply with this Ordinance.

2. The area within the flagpole portion of a flag lot shall not be counted as lot area for the purpose of meeting the minimum lot area requirements of this Ordinance.
3. The flagpole portion of a flag lot shall have a minimum width of 20 feet for its entire depth, and the depth or length of the flagpole shall not exceed 450 feet.
4. As a condition of approval for a flag lot, an encroachment permit must be obtained from the appropriate agency governing access, and an Access Easement Agreement for shared access between the owner of the flag lot and the lot from which the flag lot was created is recorded in the Office of the Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance.
5. Dwelling groups on flag lots shall meet the requirements of this Ordinance.

ARTICLE 8.8 TREE PRESERVATION

§8.8.1 TREE SURVEYS

Tree surveys shall comply with the following:

- A. Lots within subdivisions shall be laid out and designed to provide a buildable area on each lot that does not require the removal of Grand Trees.
- B. Tree protection standards are described in Chapter 9 of this Ordinance.
- C. Tree Surveys on lots of one acre or less are to include Grand Trees on the entire lot. Tree Surveys of Grand Trees may be requested upon site inspection if lots greater than one acre appear to be unbuildable due to the presence of Grand trees.
- D. Tree Surveys of all Grand Trees are required within access easements, drainage easements, and rights-of-way.

ARTICLE 8.9 TREES, SHRUBS, AND PAVEMENT

§8.9.1 MINIMUM OFFSET OF TREES AND SHRUBS FROM ROAD PAVEMENT

- A. Trees and shrubs shall be set back from street and road pavement in accordance with the following minimum requirements:

Roadside Feature	Speed (MPH)	Offset from Edge of Pavement (feet)	
		Canopy Trees	Understory Trees/Shrubs
Guiderail	All	5*	3*
Barrier Curb	40 and less	5*	3*
	45 to 50	8*	5*
	55 and greater	12*	5*
Open Shoulder	40 and less	10	5
	45 to 50	15	7
	55 and greater	20	10

*Tree limbs hanging below 15 feet in height shall be trimmed so that they do not encroach beyond the back of the curb. Minimum overhead clearance of 14 feet should be maintained for safe passage. When a barrier curb or guide rail exists, offset is measured from the face of the curb or guide rail to the face of the tree at ground level.

- B. Understory trees may be located two feet from the edge of pavement with the approval of the Planning Director and Public Works Director.

ARTICLE 8.10 PEDESTRIAN WAYS

§8.10.1 WHERE REQUIRED

Pedestrian ways shall be provided in all major subdivisions within the Urban and Suburban Areas of the County. If development characteristics warrant, the Planning Director may waive this requirement for any portion of the proposed subdivision. Requests for such waivers shall be submitted along with written justification to the Planning Director for approval.

§8.10.2 PLACEMENT

Paved pedestrian ways within publicly dedicated rights-of-way shall conform to the construction details for paved sidewalks contained in Charleston County Road Construction Standards, Appendix A. Unpaved, alternative surface walkways that are not within a right-of-way or drainage easement, and bike trails or walking trails that are designed to connect neighborhoods and provide access to common areas may be provided when approved by the Planning Director.

§8.10.3 TIMING OF SIDEWALK INSTALLATION

The installation of required sidewalks within proposed publicly dedicated rights-of-way can be postponed until after the Final Plat has been recorded, provided the following criteria have been met:

- A. The other required road and drainage system improvements have been completed and accepted;

- B. All final plat conditions and stipulations have been finalized;
- C. An approved Financial Guarantee is posted of an amount sufficient to guarantee completion of the required sidewalk improvements (150 percent (150%) of the actual cost, verified by the Directors of the Public Works and Planning Departments and certified by the subdivision project engineer, a minimum of \$10,000) within a time period not to exceed two (2) years; and
- D. The subdivision Developer must be issued an encroachment permit for construction of the entire subdivision sidewalk system within the proposed right-of-way.

The subdivision's required two (2) year maintenance guarantee period will start once the entire sidewalk system has been completed and approved. The construction of the sidewalk on each individual lot must be completed prior to issuing the Certificates of Occupancy.

ARTICLE 8.11 STREET NAMES, STREET SIGNS, AND ADDRESSES

§8.11.1 STREET NAMES

Street names proposed by the applicant must be placed on reserve with the Planning Department prior to submitting a plat. See Article 3.15, Addressing and Street Names.

§8.11.2 STREET SIGNS

Installation and maintenance of street signs on private roads or easements are the responsibility of the applicant, developer, Home Owners Association, or property owners in accordance with the Charleston County Road Construction Standards in Appendix A of this Ordinance, MUTCD Standards, and with Chapter 4; and Article VII of the Charleston County Code of Ordinances, as amended.

§8.11.3 EFFECT OF SUBDIVISION ON EXISTING ADDRESSES AND/OR STREET NAMES

The process of subdividing property and/or creating access to a lot(s) may affect the addresses on the subject property and/or adjacent properties and may affect the names of existing roads and/or easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ascertain from the Planning Department and Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch Center (CDC) if the proposed subdivision will impact existing addresses or road/easement names and comply with the following requirements prior to Final Plat approval:

- A. If the proposed subdivision will affect addresses on the subject property and/or adjacent properties, the applicant must submit affidavits signed by all owners of all affected properties stating they are aware of the pending address changes and understand that their addresses will be changed by the CDC following approval and recording of the proposed subdivision.
- B. If the proposed subdivision requires existing roads or easements to be named or renamed, the applicant must work with affected property owners to file a road name/road name change petition, along with a plat showing the proposed location of the road/easement to be named/renamed, with the CDC for review and approval. Upon approval of a road name by the CDC, the applicant shall submit to the Planning Department a revised plat showing the road/easement name in the approved location,

the road name/road name change petition, and documentation of the CDC approval. If such road naming/renaming results in the changing of addresses, the requirements of subsection A above shall also apply.

ARTICLE 8.12 UNDERGROUND UTILITIES AND SERVICES

All electrical, telephone, cable television and similar distribution lines providing service to a development site should be installed underground.

ARTICLE 8.13 WATER SUPPLY AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

In accordance with South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) regulations, all subdivisions shall be served by approved water and sewer systems. For the purpose of Article 8.13, a wastewater and/or water treatment facility connection is accessible when it adjoins the property in question, and the water/sewer provider has granted permission to connect to the system. Where annexations or easements to cross adjacent property are necessary for connection to a treatment facility, the wastewater/water service shall not be considered accessible.

- A. If accessible, the applicant must provide documentation from the water and/or sewer service provider that ensures the requirements of the provider have been met.
- B. If not accessible, the applicant must provide documentation from South Carolina DHEC that ensures all new lots have met minimum soil requirements for the installation of an individual on-site wastewater and/or well system.

This provision shall not be interpreted to require that subdivisions be annexed in order to obtain public water or sewer service. All new lots created are to have a means of wastewater disposal, either by individual wastewater systems or physical sewer lateral connection to each lot. New lots may be created without a means of wastewater disposal, provided that they comply with the provisions of Section 8.3.1.G, Non-Buildable Lots, or Section 8.3.1.H Lots of Record, Approved located within any 208 Water Quality Management Designation within the Urban/Suburban Area of the County of this Ordinance.

ARTICLE 8.14 FINANCIAL GUARANTEES (SURETY)

§8.14.1 PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES

- A. In lieu of completing the required subdivision improvements of this Chapter, a financial guarantee in the form of a no-contest, irrevocable bank letter of credit, or performance and payment bond underwritten by an acceptable South Carolina licensed corporate surety, subject to County attorney approval of the guarantee to determine that the interests of Charleston County are fully protected.
- B. The applicant shall submit to the appropriate governmental agency a detailed itemized unit cost estimate for the proposed public improvements to be included in the financial guarantee. Performance Guarantees are for Public Improvements only; Public Roads, Public Water and Public Sewer. (Example: public roads constructed to County Road Standards dedicated to the public and accepted into the road system by Charleston County Council, or a public water system approved and accepted by another public entity). Charleston County

will only accept a Financial Guarantee (Surety) for two (2) or more of the above public improvements. The amount of the financial guarantee shall be verified by the appropriate governmental agency that exercises operational control (Commissioners of Public Works for public water, Commissioners of the appropriate Public Service Districts for street name signs and public sewer, and the Public Works Director for all other public improvements covered in this Chapter). The amount shall be sufficient to guarantee completion of the required improvement (125 percent of the actual cost of the improvements with a minimum of \$10,000) within a time period specified by the government agencies, not to exceed two years. The governmental agencies determining the amount of financial guarantee shall provide a letter to the Planning Director (copy to the applicant) setting forth the amount of bond, conditions of acceptance and the period covered. The Planning Director will inform all interested governmental agencies, particularly the County Building Inspection Director.

- C. Upon completion of the improvements as required by this Chapter, written notice thereof shall be given by the applicant to the bond holder, who shall cause an inspection of the improvements to be made. The bond holder will, within 30 days of the date of notice, authorize in writing the release of the security given, provided improvements have been completed in accordance with the required specifications. Should the improvements not be completed in accordance with the required specifications by the date originally stipulated in writing by the bond holder, the funds derived from said bond will be used by the bond holder to complete the improvements according to required specifications, at the earliest reasonable time. Where it appears that the bond was insufficient to finance the required improvements after the applicant has defaulted, County Council will assess the individual applicant the cost of the improvements over and above the surety amount.
- D. In no instance will the bond issuer or bond holder be authorized to extend for the applicant the completion date originally stipulated.
- E. Pro-rated refunds based on a percentage of overall completion shall not be authorized, with the exception of an irrevocable bank letter of credit.
- F. In lieu of completed subdivision improvements, the decision-making body may accept the written guarantee of a governmental agency to complete required improvements within 90 days of the date of such acceptance by County Council. Failure to complete required improvements within the 90-day period shall void any subdivision approvals received by the applicant.
- G. The acceptance of performance bonds in lieu of completed performance is made possible only by the introduction of effective occupancy control. This control will be coordinated with final approvals so as to ensure that all conditions covered by one or more bonds are completely fulfilled, except as specified in the Charleston County Building Code, before an occupancy permit can be issued by the County Building Inspection Director.

§8.14.2 MAINTENANCE GUARANTEES

Street and stormwater management/drainage systems that are to be dedicated to Charleston

County for public maintenance shall be under warranty for all defects and failures for a period of two years. Prior to Final Plat approval, the developer shall provide written verification of financial responsibility for the correction of any defects and/or failures in those related improvements that will be dedicated to the county. The warranty shall be in an amount of at least ten percent of the construction costs. The cost amounts shall be verified by the Public Works Director. The warranty shall be effective for a period of two years from the date of acceptance by the County Council. The financial warranty shall be in the form of a no-contest, irrevocable bank letter of credit, a performance and payment bond underwritten by an acceptable South Carolina licensed corporate surety. Payment is subject to County Attorney approval of the guarantee to determine that the interests of Charleston County are protected. The Public Works Director shall maintain surveillance over the system and provide written notification to the developer if repair work is required during the warranty period. The Public Works Director shall identify defects not considered to be a public safety issue and notify the developer of such defects. The developer shall then have 30 days to prepare a schedule of corrective actions and begin such corrective actions. If not completed within the approved schedule, the Public Works Director shall make the repairs and bill the bonding company. Public safety defects shall be addressed immediately by the Public Works Director, with reimbursement from the bonding company.

ARTICLE 8.15 CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS

§8.15.1 PURPOSE AND INTENT

Conservation subdivisions implement the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan by encouraging residential development in the Rural Areas to maintain rural character and conserve land, promoting compact development form, and preserving natural features. The guidelines for site development emphasize setting aside and conserving the most sensitive areas of a site, with the development of building lots on the remaining less sensitive areas.

§8.15.2 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHARLESTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Conservation subdivisions implement Rural Guideline 3 of the Comprehensive Plan, which states "Develop gross densities at the higher range of the recommended future land use when Clustering or Conservation Design is used, as exhibited in Figure 3.1.3, to offset the provision of significant amounts of preserved land, especially in the Rural Residential and Rural Agricultural Future Land Use categories." Conservation subdivisions shall comply with the applicable Rural Area Purpose and Intent and Rural Guidelines contained in Chapter 3 of the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan.

§8.15.3 APPLICABILITY

Conservation subdivisions shall be allowed within the RR-3, Rural Residential, and AG-8, Agricultural Preservation, Zoning Districts. In case of conflict between the regulations of this Article and other regulations in this Ordinance, the regulations of this Article shall control. Where no special Conservation Subdivision regulation is stated in this Article, the regulations of the applicable underlying Zoning District and all other applicable provisions of this Ordinance shall apply.

§8.15.4 PROCEDURES

The preliminary plat and final plat subdivision regulations outlined in Chapter 8 of this Ordinance shall apply to conservation subdivisions. A pre-application Sketch Plan review meeting with County staff shall be required prior to preliminary plat submittal.

§8.15.5 PROCESS

The conservation subdivision process shall include:

A. RESOURCE ANALYSIS/MAPPING

The applicant shall identify and map significant natural and cultural resources within the development boundaries. The resource analysis shall identify two categories of resources: primary Conservation Areas and secondary Conservation Areas. Primary Conservation Areas include bodies of water, wetlands, floodplains, wildlife habitat, significant vegetation (particularly Grand Trees and Protected Trees), historic buildings, and any historical or archaeological sites. Secondary Conservation Areas include, but are not limited to, areas of active agricultural use(s), scenic vistas, and lands with recreational opportunities. The resource analysis may also show any resources and protected open space on neighboring parcels, through aerial photography and other readily accessible documentation, which may enhance the proposed conservation subdivision. All conservation subdivision applications shall include a resource analysis map and calculations for the Conservation Area.

B. SKETCH PLAN REVIEW

The applicant shall schedule a pre-application sketch plan review meeting with County staff. At that time, the applicant shall submit a detailed sketch plan delineating Conservation Areas and cluster lot development areas based on the resource analysis map. Significant cultural and natural resources identified on the resource analysis map shall be included in Conservation Areas. The sketch plan review is intended to ensure that the property improvements are in compliance with conservation subdivision requirements of this Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan.

C. PRELIMINARY PLAT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Based on the resource analysis map and sketch plan review, the applicant shall submit a plat for preliminary plat review and approval, in compliance with the requirements of this Article and with Chapter 8 of this Ordinance. The preliminary plat shall identify the Conservation Areas and cluster lot development areas.

D. FINAL PLAT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The applicant shall submit a conservation subdivision plat for Final Plat review and approval, in compliance with the requirements of this Article and with Chapter 8 of this Ordinance. The final plat shall identify the Conservation Areas and cluster lot development areas.

§8.15.6 DENSITY/INTENSITY AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

Conservation subdivisions shall be subject to the following density/intensity and dimensional standards:

CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY STANDARDS		
	RR-3 Zoning District	AG-8 Zoning District
MINIMUM CONTIGUOUS SITE AREA	3 acres	30 acres
MAXIMUM DENSITY Note: Maximum density shall be calculated based on the total highland acreage and shall not include freshwater wetland or OCRM Critical Line area acreage.	1 dwelling unit per 2 acres when 30% to 49.9% of total site area is delineated as a Conservation Area	1 dwelling unit per 6 acres when 30% to 49.9% of total site area is delineated as a Conservation Area
	1 dwelling unit per acre when 50% or more of total site area is delineated as a Conservation Area	1 dwelling unit per 4 acres when 50% or more of total site area is delineated as a Conservation Area
WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS	See §8.15.7 for lots abutting an OCRM Critical Line	
MINIMUM LOT AREA	Variable but must establish min. 40' x 40' buildable area and meet all Zoning, SCDHEC, Building Services, and Fire Department requirements	
MINIMUM LOT WIDTH: DEPTH RATIO	Depth of the Lot shall not exceed 5 times the width of the lot (1:5 ratio)	
MINIMUM SETBACKS AND BUFFERS		
Front Yard	25 feet	
Side Yard	10 feet	
Rear Yards	10 feet	
Perimeter Buffers	See §8.15.9.C	
OCRM Critical Line Setbacks and Buffers	See §8.15.7 for lots abutting an OCRM Critical Line	
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE (includes all impervious surfaces)		
Lot less than 15,000 square feet in size	25%	
Lot 15,000 square feet or greater in size	3,750 square feet	
MAXIMUM HEIGHT	35 feet	

§8.15.7 WATERFRONT LOT STANDARDS

One of the following standards must be utilized to determine the lot configuration and number of lots to be located along an OCRM Critical Line.

- A. When a 50 foot to 74.9-foot setback from the OCRM Critical Line is utilized on private lots in a Conservation Subdivision:

1. The total number of waterfront lots created shall not exceed the total number of waterfront lots that could be developed based on a 135 foot lot width average.
 2. A thirty-five (35) foot buffer from the OCRM Critical Line must be maintained, as required by Section 8.15.9.C below.
 3. A private dock or joint use dock may be utilized.
- B. When a minimum 75 foot setback from the OCRM Critical Line is utilized on private lots in a Conservation Subdivision:
1. The total number of waterfront lots created shall not exceed the total number of waterfront lots that could be developed based on a 100 foot lot width average.
 2. A 35 foot buffer from the OCRM Critical Line must be maintained, as required by Section 8.15.9.C below.
 3. If a dock is desired, a joint use dock shall be utilized.
- C. When a 100 foot setback from the OCRM Critical Line is utilized as protected open space through a Conservation Area in a Conservation Subdivision:
1. The total number of lots created shall only have to meet the dimensional standards listed in Section 8.15.6, above, and shall not be calculated based on any lot width average.
 2. A 35 foot buffer from the OCRM Critical Line must be maintained, as required by Section 8.15.9.C below.
 3. If a dock is desired, a community dock must be utilized; however, the community dock shall be exempt from the Special Exception requirement.

§8.15.8 CONSERVATION AREA STANDARDS

Conservation Areas shall be located to preserve significant resources and shall comply with the following requirements:

- A. Conservation Areas shall be detailed on each Sketch Plan and recorded with the Final Plat, Conditional Plat, or separate instrument.
- B. Conservation Areas may include unimproved land, agricultural lands, natural landscapes, landscaped areas, improved recreation areas, recreational buildings, and structures that are totally accessory to agricultural or recreational uses, as well as freshwater wetland areas and surface water. Conservation Areas shall not be occupied by streets, drives, parking areas, or structures, other than agricultural or recreational structures.
- C. Conservation Areas shall be provided within each phase of the conservation subdivision in sufficient amounts to serve the expected population of that phase.

- D. The applicant must have proof of commitment from the entity that will be responsible for the Conservation Area prior to the recording of a plat. Conservation Areas shall be conveyed prior to recording the final plat, in accordance with one of the methods listed below:
1. By dedication to the County as publicly-owned open space. Parks, conservation areas, and recreation facilities proposed for dedication to the County must be acceptable to the Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, County Council, and other governmental entities with regard to the size, shape, location, improvement, environmental condition (i.e., the applicant may be required to provide an environmental assessment), and budgetary and maintenance terms; or
 2. By leasing, conveying, or retaining title to a corporation, homeowner's association or other legal entity. The terms of such lease or other instrument of conveyance must restrict the use of the Conservation Area(s) to open space and/or agricultural or recreational uses.

§8.15.9 CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION DESIGN STANDARDS

Generally, a conservation subdivision has three primary characteristics: smaller building lots; more open space; and protection of cultural and natural features and agricultural lands.

A. VEHICULAR ACCESS

The requirements of Appendix A Road Construction Standards of this Ordinance shall apply. Lots shall be configured to minimize the amount of roadway and driveway length. Shared driveways shall be utilized in order to minimize impervious surfaces through the reduction of pavement area. The use of pervious materials for driveway construction is required.

B. PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Pedestrian access shall be provided from all residential lots to the Conservation Area(s) through a continuous system of pervious walkways and/or trails. Access corridors in an easement a minimum of 10' in width shall be utilized to separate clusters of contiguous lots and to connect the conservation area(s) to the right-of-way and trail system.

C. BUFFERS

The conservation subdivision development shall be designed to preserve existing non-invasive vegetation. A 35' minimum natural undeveloped buffer shall be preserved along the external perimeter and/or property line of the conservation subdivision development, as well as along all OCRM Critical Lines, in order to protect natural features and retain the rural community character. The buffer may be included within the Conservation Area(s) or within individual parcels.

§8.15.10 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS WITHIN A CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION

One (1) maximum 600 square foot detached accessory dwelling unit is allowed on lots that do not abut an OCRM Critical Line. Accessory dwelling units shall not be permitted on private waterfront lots.