

FAQ

For Residents about Subdivisions

How do I find out if my subdivision road is private or owned by the town?

See list on Planning Board website or contact the Town Clerk at 978-897-5034.

Who will be responsible for snow plowing?

If the town has accepted the subdivision road, the town will plow the street; if a homeowners' association accepts the road from the developer, they should arrange for their own snow plowing services. The developer is responsible for the road until such time the Planning Board signs off on completion of the subdivision and Town Meeting accepts the road or the developer turns the road over to a homeowners' association.

Who owns the right-of-way and where is it located?

*If the Town has accepted the subdivision road, the town owns the entire right-of-way; it is **not** an easement. The right-of-way extends beyond the paved roadway (often times residents install their mailboxes or landscape within in the right of way). Residents should consult with the Highway Department before installing anything in the right-of-way. In order to determine where your property bounds end and where the right of way begins, residents should have a survey of their property conducted. Residents can also view subdivision plans in the Planning Department to approximate where the right of way is located.*

How close to the property line can I construct a building or pool?

	<i>Side Yard Setback</i>	<i>Rear Yard Setback</i>	<i>Front Yard Setback</i>
<i>Conventional(200' frontage, 1 ½ acre)</i>	25'	40'	30'
<i>Planned Conservation Development –PCD- (reduced frontage and lot size)</i>	20'	20'	20'

No structure can be within 50' of the open land. If you are considering building a structure or a pool, please contact the Building Department at 978-897-2193.

How do I find out who owns the open space in my development?

If you live in a Planned Conservation Development (PCD), the town, a non-profit or the homeowners' association owns the open land. This information can be found by searching the deed for the property or checking with the Board of Assessors.

Can I landscape the entrance of my subdivision?

If the entrance to the subdivision is within the town's right of way, the Superintendent of Streets should be contacted to review any proposed plans or suggestions. 978-897-8071.

Why are street trees required as part of a subdivision plan?

When a subdivision is being built the entire right of way is cleared in order to install drainage structures and construct the roadway. During this process several trees from the natural landscape are lost. The town requires the developer to plant street trees to replace trees that were removed in order to achieve the Planning Board's subdivision design goals. Street trees not only provide environmental benefits but have also been found to reduce vehicular speed, increase property value, and help maintain the rural character of the town.

Are there any restrictions as to what type of outdoor lighting fixtures I can install?
Stow has specific guidelines for exterior lighting fixtures. No outdoor lighting shall shine on an adjacent property or towards any street in such a manner that would create a nuisance or hazard. New subdivisions are required to have full cut off exterior lighting. A description of full cut off lighting and the entire lighting bylaw can be found under Sections 3.8.1.5.1 – 3.8.1.5.7 of the Zoning Bylaws.

What should I do if I want to re-grade my property?

If you plan to re-grade your property please contact the Highway Department or Planning Department to determine if it will interfere with the existing drainage systems.

Can I landscape around a fire cistern?

A clear path from the roadway to the fire cistern must be maintained in order for fire safety vehicles to access the cistern in an emergency situation.

If my development has a monitoring well, how often should my homeowners' association check it?

Depending on the location, topography and abutting uses or prior use of the subject property, the Planning Board may require monitoring wells so that property owners are assured that their drinking water supply is not at risk.

Typically monitoring wells are required to be checked every year to two years; this requirement would be noted in the homeowners' association documents, in the deed, or in the planning board decision for the subdivision.

How do I know if there are any special conditions/restrictions that apply to my property?

Your property may be subject to certain conditions/restrictions required by a Planning Board, Board of Health or Conservation Decision. A copy of any such condition/restriction is on file with the respective departments and is recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

Do I need a permit to operate a business out of my home?

Home occupations are allowed by right under Section 3.2.1.7 of the Zoning Bylaw. Refer to Section 7.3.3.3 of the Zoning Bylaw to determine parking requirements for uses permitted in the Residential District

To determine if you need to obtain a business certificate please call the Town Clerk at 978-897-5034.

How do I get approval for a sign?

Before installing any sign on your property see Section 6.3. Most signs require a permit from the Building Department, for the list of exceptions see Section 6.3.6.

Requirements in the Residential and Recreation-Conservation District are as follows:

6.3.3.1 Residential and Recreation-Conservation Districts:

1. One (1) ON-SITE SIGN is permitted not exceeding five (5) square feet in area on State numbered highways and three (3) square feet in area elsewhere.

2. One (1) ON-SITE SIGN pertaining to the rent, lease or sale of land or BUILDING(s) not exceeding three (3) square feet in area. All such SIGNS shall be removed within seven (7) days of rental, lease or sale of land or BUILDING.

3. One ON-SITE SIGN pertaining to agriculture, as permitted in Sections 3.1.1.2, 3.1.1.3, 3.1.1.5, and Section 3.2.1.1, each not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area, may be ERECTED.