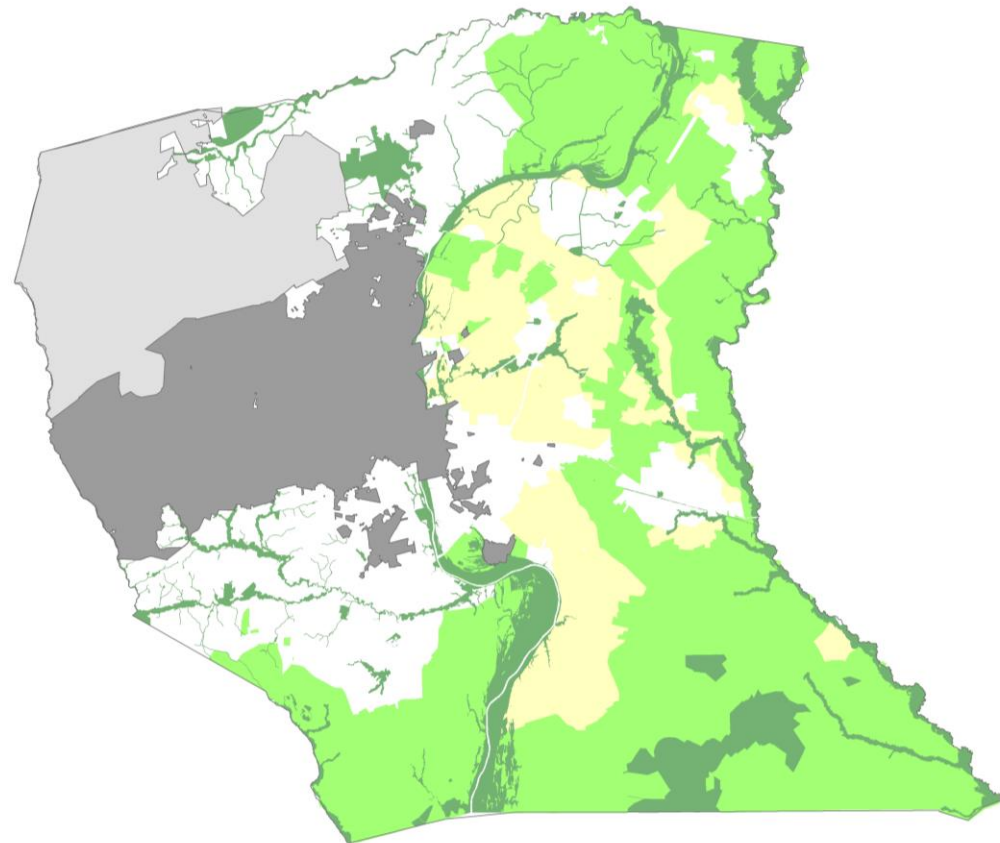




# Preserving Rural Character

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CUMBERLAND COUNTY  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT



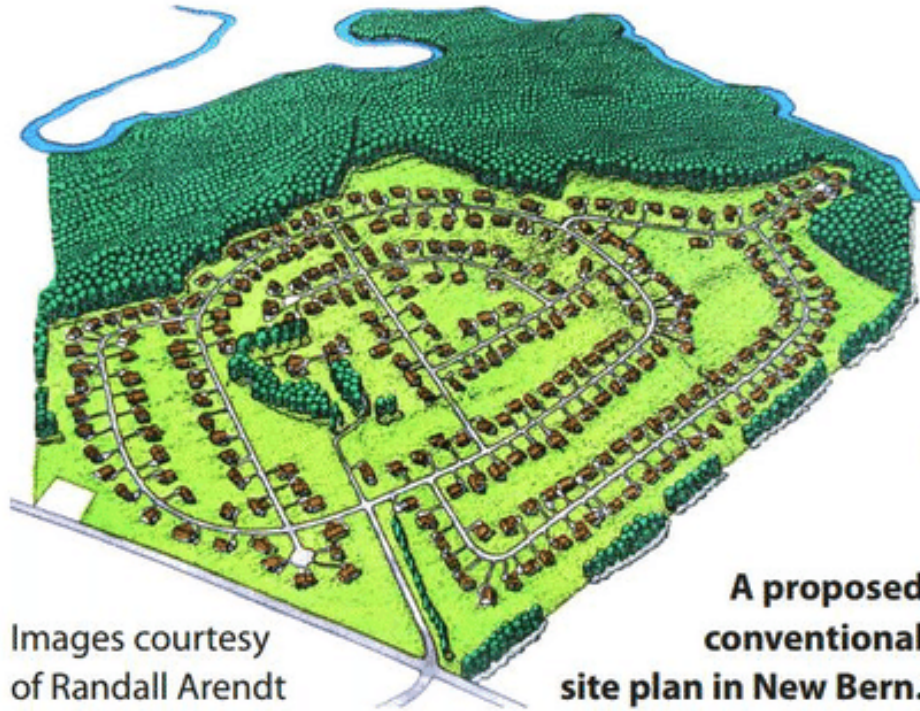
\*\*\* As of November 2020, the Bethany Area Land Use Plan has not been adopted. This map depicts a rough draft of the Future Land Use for this area.



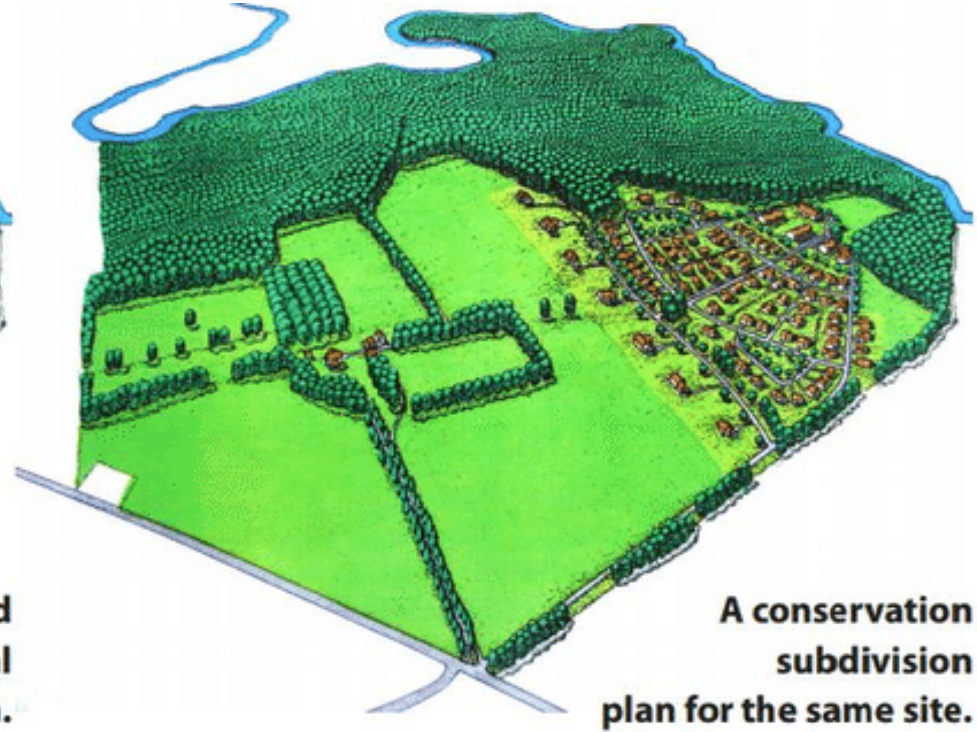
# Background

- Recently adopted land use plans located in rural areas of the County
- An over arching theme in these plans is a strong desire to preserve rural character
- Modifications to ordinances can achieve this objective
- None of these modifications would affect currently approved developments, only future development





Images courtesy  
of Randall Arendt



# Conservation Developments

- Type of **residential** subdivision that allows for the preservation of important land features like open fields, wetlands, farmland, etc.
- Locate houses on smaller parcels of land while the additional land left over is converted into common shared open space that will not be developed

# Conservation Development Benefits

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- **Higher Home Values**

- Offer additional economic and environmental benefits
- Homes sell faster and for more and can save on construction costs

- **Reduced Infrastructure Costs**

- Reducing the developed land area will decrease infrastructure and engineering costs
- Reduces cleared and graded area

- **Stormwater Management**

- Clustering homes reduces the amount of impervious surface
- Less impervious surface reduces runoff and pollutant load

Information derived from NC State University Conservation Subdivision Handbook

# What's in our ordinance?

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Currently, what is referred to as “Density Development- Conditional Zoning District” located in the County’s Zoning Ordinance, is the County’s example of **conservation developments**.

Density Developments currently require:

- **Perimeter buffers**
- **40% of the total tract must be open space (20% of which cannot include wetlands, waterbodies, or floodways)**
- **This open space is permanently restricted from future subdivision or development**

These requirements are tools that **protect rural character**. However, the process to obtain a density development is not efficient and does not promote the use of this type of development.

Modifications to the ordinance can promote the use of this type of development.

# Promoting Conservation Developments

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Adjustments to the current ordinances that would promote conservation developments:

- Modify name from “Density Development” to “**Conservation Development**”
  - The County’s Conservation Developments would employ the same requirements already in place
- Move from Zoning Ordinance to **Subdivision Ordinance** in order to simplify the process
- Conservation Developments would become a use by right in all **agricultural and residential zoning districts**

# Modify Zero Lot Line Developments

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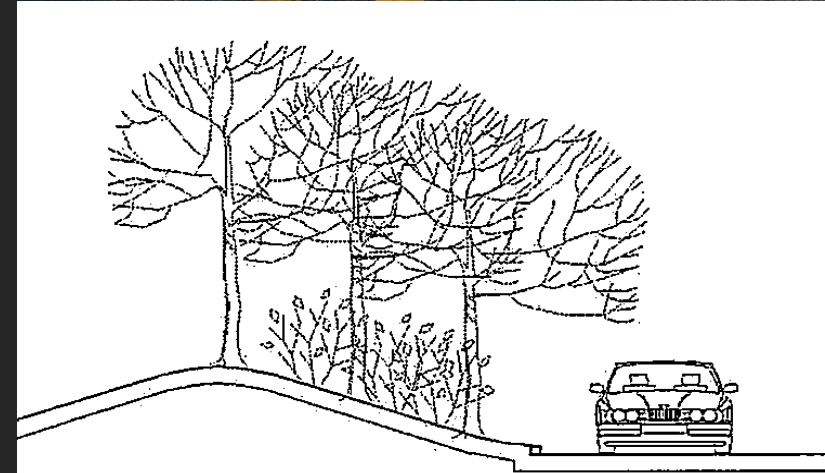
- What is currently in the subdivision ordinance as “Zero Lot Line Developments” is better defined as “**Variable Lot Developments**”
- A **variable lot development** is a subdivision where lots may be smaller and may have varied setbacks than the zoning district allows, but does not exceed the number of lots allowed by that district
- In modifying the ordinance, Variable Lot Developments would become a **use by right** in residential zoning districts **R20, R20A, R15, R7.5, R6, R6A, R5, R5A**
- Variable Lot Developments would require a **conditional zoning** when proposed in zoning districts **A1, A1A, R40, R40A, R30, R30A, RR**
- By making these modifications, Variable Lot Developments located in rural areas may have certain conditions placed on them in order to be approved



# How do these modifications help rural character?

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- Changing the location of Conservation Developments from the Zoning Ordinance to the Subdivision Ordinance makes for a more streamlined and shorter process in obtaining a Conservation Development.
- By adjusting the use matrix, Variable Lot Developments located in rural areas may require certain conditions in order to preserve rural character such as (but not limited to) perimeter buffers or berms.



PLANTED BERM



# What will change?

## Current Ordinance

Density Development- Conditional Zoning District

## Modified Ordinance

Conservation Development- Special Development in Subdivision Ordinance

Same guidelines

Zero Lot Line Development

Variable Lot Development

Same guidelines;  
Triggers  
conditional zoning  
when in zoning  
districts A1-RR as  
shown below

Proposed Use  
Matrix

| Land Uses                | CD | A1 | A1A | R40 | R40A | R30 | R30A | RR | R20 | R20A | R15 | R7.5 | R6 | R6A | R5 | R5A | O&I(P) | C1(P) | C2(P) | C(P) | M1(P) | M(P) |
|--------------------------|----|----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|----|-----|------|-----|------|----|-----|----|-----|--------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|
| Conservation Development |    | P  | P   | P   | P    | P   | P    | P  | P   | P    | P   | P    | P  | P   | P  | P   |        |       |       |      |       |      |
| Variable Lot Development |    | Z  | Z   | Z   | Z    | Z   | Z    | Z  | P   | P    | P   | P    | P  | P   | P  | P   |        |       |       |      |       |      |

# Keep in mind

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This modification **does not**:

- Remove the ability to do a variable lot development (currently called zero lot line development) in any zoning district
- Decrease or increase the number of lots allowed in any development; the number of lots allowed in any type of development is determined by the zoning district it is in
- Affect currently approved developments; only future development

# We want your feedback!

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Please check out the supplemental material also included on our page and be sure to submit your comments!

We are accepting comments on our website by **February 22, 2021**. Our staff is available to answer any questions, Monday- Friday 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. at the contact information below. Thank you for your feedback!

Rufus Smith, Planning Manager  
[rsmith@co.cumberland.nc.us](mailto:rsmith@co.cumberland.nc.us)  
(910) 678-7629

Betty Lynd, Planning Manager  
[blynd@co.cumberland.nc.us](mailto:blynd@co.cumberland.nc.us)  
(910) 678- 7605

Jennifer Oppenlander, Senior Planner  
[joppenlander@co.cumberland.nc.us](mailto:joppenlander@co.cumberland.nc.us)  
(910) 678-7611