



Land Hero Talking Points for Supersize My Backyard™ campaign

1. **Conservation subdivisions** preserve *50% to 70% or more of the **buildable** land, *plus* the wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains, while allowing the **same number of homesites** as conventional subdivisions. This is an innovative, efficient, no-cost, balanced approach to preserve our community's rural character and the valuable open spaces and natural resources your residents don't want to see disappear.

2. **This is NOT clustering.** Clustering normally only preserves 25% to 30% of the land and this protected land often includes land that could not be built on, i.e. unbuildable wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains. Clustering uses the outdated method of pushing homes close together in pod-like arrangements. Conservation subdivisions strategically place home sites for privacy and maximum value-the best views of open space.

3. Conservation subdivisions have the **same density** as zoning would allow with a conventional subdivision, no more, no less. The houses are simply rearranged to preserve over half of the buildable land. This is NOT a PUD (planned unit development) New Urbanism style development where densities often are increased.

4. **Save Money.** Conservation subdivisions reduce demand and costs for public land acquisition.

5. **Clean Water, Lower Expenses.** Conservation subdivisions greatly reduce storm water run off, water pollution and water treatment costs and increase ground water recharge due to the large tracts of natural lands which filter and absorb water. Lakeshores, rivers and streams are often left undeveloped to preserve natural areas and for all residents to enjoy.

6. **Lot sizes in conservation subdivisions vary in size** determined by market demand and the area. For instance, in Sugar Creek Preserve, a conservation subdivision in southern Wisconsin, lot sizes range from 40,510 sq. ft. (.93 acres) to 187,448 SF (4.3 acres) with the average being 53,500 sq. ft. (1.3 acres). Other conservation subdivisions offer lot sizes of 3/4 acre, 1/2 acre, and some in urban settings offer lot sizes at 1/4 acre. As most of the homes have views of open space, and access to these acres, **the size of the yard becomes much less important.** This has been proven time and time again in fast selling lake lots and golf course developments which have smaller lot sizes.

7. Although the intent may be to protect land, **large lot residential zoning often wastes land.** Low density development, such as 2, 5 and 10-acre lots, often mean that development will spread into the countryside, requiring improved roads and increased sewer, water and other services costly to create and expensive to maintain. Often large lots do not preserve natural lands or rural character and are simply large manicured lawns that will eventually be rezoned and split up.

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8. **It works!** Hamburg Township in Livingston County, Michigan implemented conservation subdivision design and **has protected nearly 2,000 acres** at no cost to the community, representing a land value of \$40 million. Applied on a county-wide basis, Hanover County, Virginia has **protected over 5,000 acres** through conservation design at no cost to the community.

9. **Communities that adopt these standards (conservation subdivisions) are preserving an average of 62% of land each time a property is developed**, according to the Natural Lands Trust, in Media, PA

Advantages

- Great views
- Nearby walking trails
- Same number of homes
- More profitable
- Preserve land, wildlife, water quality, community character

Fair to developers and landowners: More profitable

"The results show that **lots in conservation subdivisions carry a premium, are less expensive to build, and sell more quickly** than lots in conventional subdivisions."

"Together, the results show that conservation subdivisions are more profitable to developers than conventional subdivisions."

"That lots in conservation subdivisions sold in about half the time as lots in conventional subdivisions must be advantageous to the cash flow of developers."

"These numbers translate into premiums for lots in conservation subdivisions ranging from \$13,000 to \$18,000 per acre over lots in conventional subdivisions."

From "The Economics of Conservation Subdivisions", Wayne State University, MI

*In urban, sewerred, high density areas zoned at 2-3-4 units per acre, preserving 40% open space, in addition to the unbuildable wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes, is the norm. In rural, suburban edge areas at densities of 5 and 10 acres per dwelling, easily 70% (or more) of the land can be preserved.

About LandChoices

LandChoices is the first and only national non-profit group promoting innovative conservation subdivisions to preserve clean water, wildlife, natural areas and the working farms you cherish.