

**ARTICLE VIII. ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT  
SUBURBAN TRANSITION DISTRICT REGULATIONS**

The Suburban Transition zoning districts are intended to accommodate a range of development densities and land development patterns within areas of the County that are expected to transition from agriculture and other rural land uses to suburban land uses in the next 10 to 20 years. These districts are established to provide for the continuation of agricultural activities as well as low density residential development with a predominantly agricultural/residential character by maintaining the current level of development in areas where suburban development has not yet occurred.

The **TRM** zoning district is intended to accommodate low to moderate density development of single-family dwellings and neighborhoods, including manufactured homes, in areas of the County which are still predominantly rural, yet transitioning to suburban development where urban infrastructure is not in existence nor planned.

The principle underlying the **MUC** district is that of controlled flexibility. This district is designed to maximize the development options available to a landowner or developer of property located on the fringe of the suburban area identified in the adopted comprehensive plan, while at the same time ensuring that the integrity of the County's natural resources is protected, that developments are served by adequate infrastructure services and drainage systems, and that the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Dorchester County are protected.

The **RR** zoning district is intended to preserve the viability of existing agricultural operations and the integrity of significant natural resource areas, as well as open space, within areas of the County designated for suburban growth. The County contemplates that future proposals for development of lots within this district of a greater intensity than permitted herein will be accompanied by requests for zoning changes to the PD or SR zoning districts. Specifically, it is the intent of the rural transition districts:

- (a) To provide standards that manage the intensity of development in areas of sensitive natural resources or natural features in order to reduce or eliminate adverse environmental impacts; to protect the viability of existing agricultural operations; to conserve clean air, pure water, and the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment; and to provide for adequate open space both within and surrounding suburban development;
- (b) To provide standards that ensure dwelling units constructed in these districts provide safe, decent, sound, and sanitary housing;
- (c) To provide clear and streamlined administrative mechanisms to ensure that the standards for developments in these districts are met; and
- (d) To promote the use of cluster development as a means of meeting environmental and housing goals.

**Section 8.1 TRM, Transitional Residential District**

**8.1.1 Statement of Intent**

The intent of this district is:

- (a) To implement goals of the County’s Land Use Plan regarding low to moderate density development of single-family dwellings and neighborhoods in areas of the County which are still predominantly rural, yet transitioning to suburban development, in accordance with the adopted Future Land Use map in the Dorchester County Comprehensive Plan for Settlement Type Character identified as low density;
- (b) To minimize development problems in such areas where due to the absence of urban infrastructure, individual on-site sewerage disposal systems are necessary;
- (c) To protect development in such areas from infiltration by incompatible land uses;
- (d) To provide for the development of recreational, religious, and educational facilities as basic elements of a balanced residential area; and
- (e) To permit the location of community facilities needed in support of residential development.

**8.1.2 Permitted Uses**

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
1(a),(b)	Agriculture
2	Residential, Single-Family Detached
5	MH, Mfg. Housing
23(d)	Utilities
24 (a),(b),(c)	Community Services
25	Open Space

**8.1.3 Conditional Uses**

The following uses may be permitted in the TRM zoning district provided they conform to the performance standards or conditions listed for each in Section 10.4.

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
6(c),(d)	Social and Cultural
7(a),(d)	Business, Residential-Bed and Breakfasts
23(c)	Utilities

<b>Accessory Uses</b>	Accessory dwelling units Accessory structures Home occupations.
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#### **8.1.4 Density Regulations**

Development density shall not exceed one principal dwelling unit on each legally platted lot or parcel of record.

#### **8.1.5 Minimum Lot and Building Requirements**

- (a) All lots zoned TRM shall be a minimum of 43,560 square feet (1 ac.) in area, provided however that they must be of sufficient size to meet the minimum requirements of the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control regarding the provision of water and sewer (septic) service.
- (b) All lots must be a minimum of 150 feet in width.
- (c) The following minimum yards shall be provided:

Front yard	40 feet
Side yard	10 feet
Rear yard	35 feet

#### **8.1.6 Maximum Impervious Surface**

No more than 30% of the gross acreage of any lot shall be covered by impervious surfaces, with the exception of single family dwelling maximum impervious surfaces is 50 percent, provided that this requirement may be superseded by specific development guidelines adopted by Dorchester County.

**Section 8.2 MUC, Mixed Use Community District**

**8.2.1 Statement of Intent**

It is the County’s intent that the MUC zoning district will accommodate development in areas where communities have evolved with a variety of land uses and densities, guided by site design principals that strive to respect the integrity of natural resources within the County while providing a transition between suburban and rural development patterns.

The MUC District provides for a large variety of housing types at moderate densities in order to balance open space and density characteristics, to preserve natural resources and to facilitate such development with essential community and commercial uses. It further allows for development of commercial and light industrial uses as components of mixed use communities, provided such uses do not adversely impact:

- (a) the viability of prime agricultural land,
- (b) the preservation of wetlands, watercourses and other significant natural areas,
- (c) the quality of life for existing residential development, or
- (d) the scenic quality of the landscape within the County’s rural transition area.

**8.2.2 Permitted Uses**

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
1(a)	Agriculture
2	Residential, Single-Family Detached
3	Residential, Single Family Attached
6(a),(c)	Social and Cultural
7	Business, Residential
8	Business, Primary Retail
9	Business, Secondary Retail
10	Business, Convenience Retail
11(a)	Business, Communication
13(a)	Business, Recreation
14(a)	Business, Personal Services
15	Professional Services
16	Business, Office Services
17	Business, General Services
18	Business, Quick Services
20(b),(c),(d)	Manufacturing Uses
23(d)	Utilities
24	Community Services
25	Open Space

**8.2.3 Conditional Uses**

The following use groups may be permitted in the MUC zoning district provided they conform to the performance standards or conditions listed for each in Section 10.4:

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
1(b)	Agriculture, on a lot at least one acre in area
1(c)	Agriculture
4	Residential, Multi-Family
5	Residential, Manufactured housing
6(d)	Social and Cultural
11(b)	Business, Communication
16	Business, Office Services
17	Business, General Services
18	Business, Quick Services
20(b),(c),(d)	Manufacturing Uses
22(b),(d),(e)	Outdoor Storage Uses
23(a),(b),(c)	Utilities
<b>Accessory Uses</b>	Accessory dwelling units Accessory structures Home occupations.

**8.2.4 Special Exception Uses**

The following uses may be permitted in the MUC zoning district upon approval of the Board of Zoning Appeals, provided they conform with any applicable performance standards or conditions listed for each in Section 10.4 pursuant to the criteria in Section 10.5 and provisions of Section 14.5:

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
6(b)	Social and Cultural
19(b)	Transportation
22(a)	Outdoor Storage Uses

**8.2.5 Development Plan Requirements**

All development proposing more than one land use type on a tract of land within a MUC zoning district must be consistent with a Development Plan approved by County Council. At a minimum, the approved Development Plan shall delineate the following:

- (a) Sections of the tract proposed for development with specific types of residential units, maximum size of each residential land bay, and maximum number of residential units to be developed.

- (b) Sections of the tract proposed for development with office, commercial and light industrial uses, maximum size of each non-residential land bay, and maximum floor area ratio for uses within the land bay to be developed.
- (c) Principal traffic circulation routes, including traffic ways internal to the parcel, existing and abutting roads, existing and proposed access points, and through roads providing access to adjacent parcels.
- (d) Open space areas.
- (e) Watercourses, drainage ways, ponds, wetlands, lakes and other bodies of water.
- (f) Areas of significant vegetation and tree cover, existing and to be preserved.

Compliance with the lot and building requirements and applicable environmental performance standards in Articles XII and XIII. shall be demonstrated on the approved preliminary subdivision plan for each land bay.

#### **8.2.6 Density Regulations**

Certain portions of any site may be unsuitable for development. Some portions will be dedicated for roads and public rights-of-way. In determining the maximum net residential density that is allowed within a given mixed use community, acreage contained in the following will be subtracted from the gross acreage of the site:

- (a) road rights-of-way, both existing and proposed;
- (b) rights-of-way for utility transmission lines;
- (c) bodies of water, including all watercourses, lakes and ponds; and
- (d) wetlands, both saltwater and freshwater.

To determine the maximum number of residential units allowed in a given community, the net acreage of each land bay proposed for residential use is multiplied by the appropriate density standard contained in the following subsection for each residential unit type.

### 8.2.7 Lot and Building Requirements

(a) **Residential, Single-Family Detached and Manufactured Housing Units:** The following standards apply to detached single-family residences and manufactured housing units, excluding manufactured housing communities:

(1) **Maximum Density:** 2 lots per net acre of the land bay. Density of the development shall not exceed one dwelling unit for each property, platted lot or parcel of record provided that all residential lots must be of sufficient size to meet the requirements of the S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control regarding the provision of water and sewerage service.

(2) **Minimum Yard Requirements:** Where conventional lot configurations are used, the minimum setbacks from property lines shall be:

Front Yard	25 feet
Side Yard	7.5 feet
Rear Yard	25 feet

(3) A residential structure may be set on a side line, provided that a 7.5 foot easement for maintenance is acquired from the adjoining lot. This easement cannot be used as part of the required side yard setback for the adjoining lot if the result is to reduce the distance between structures to less than 15 feet.

(4) **Maximum Impervious Surface:** Where traditional lot configurations are used, no more than 40% of any lot shall be covered by impervious surfaces. Where clustering configurations are used, no more than 50% of the net acreage of the site shall be covered by impervious surfaces; with the exception of single family dwelling maximum impervious surfaces is 50 percent, provided that this requirement will be superseded by specific development guidelines adopted by Dorchester County.

(b) **Residential, Single-family Attached:** The following standards apply to land bays proposed for development with single family attached residences, e.g. patio homes, duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes, townhouses:

(1) **Maximum Density:** 5.8 dwelling units per net acre of the land bay. Provided that all residential lots must be of sufficient size to meet the requirements of the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control regarding the provision of water and sewerage service.

(2) **Minimum Yard Requirements:** The minimum setbacks from perimeter property lines shall be:

Front Yard	20 feet
Side yard	10 feet
Rear yard	20 feet

Provided that if a lot or site is included on a plat, recorded in accordance with the Dorchester County Subdivision Regulations, that provides for a pattern of zero lot line development and that shows and designates:

- a. a patio line, designating the location of the structure to be constructed with respect to the side lot line (if any) for each lot;
- b. the location of the structure to be constructed on each lot, such that the distance between any two dwelling units is not less than 15 feet; and
- c. easements for maintenance for all proposed structures situated less than 7.5 feet from a side lot line.

The minimum distance between dwelling units shall be 15 feet.

(3) **Maximum Impervious Surface:** No more than 60% of the gross acreage of a site shall be covered by impervious surfaces; with the exception of single family dwelling maximum impervious surfaces is 50 percent, provided that this requirement will be superseded by specific development guidelines adopted by Dorchester County.

(4) **Height Limitations:** No structure shall be more than two (2) stories in height, unless the entity providing fire protection service certifies that:

- a. that it can provide adequate fire protection service to a taller structure at the site in question; or
- b. that the proposed structure incorporates fire protection systems, such as sprinklers, that will provide adequate fire protection to a taller structure at the site in question.



The certification will state the maximum height to which adequate fire protection is available and the structure may be built up to this height; provided that the entity providing fire protection service shall not certify any extension in allowable height that will adversely affect the entity's or the County's ISO rating.

(c) **Residential, Multi-Family:** The following standards apply for all multi family structures and residences:

(1) **Maximum Density:** 13.0 dwelling units per net acre of the section or land bay provided that all residential lots must be of sufficient size to meet the requirements of the S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control regarding the provision of water and sewerage service.

(2) **Minimum Yard Requirements:** The minimum setbacks from the perimeter property lines for structures containing more than one residential unit shall be:

Front yard	20 feet
Side yard	10 feet
Rear yard	20 feet

The minimum distance between buildings shall be 20'.

(3) **Maximum Impervious Surface:** No more than 65% of acreage of a site shall be covered by impervious surfaces; provided that this requirement will be superseded by specific development guidelines adopted by Dorchester County.

(4) **Height Limitations:** No structure shall be more than two (2) stories in height, unless the entity providing fire protection service certifies either:

- a. that it can provide adequate fire protection service to a taller structure at the site in question; or
- b. that the proposed structure incorporates fire protection systems, such as sprinklers, that will provide adequate fire protection to a taller structure at the site in question.

The certification will state the maximum height to which adequate fire protection is available and the structure may be built up to this height; provided that the entity providing fire protection service shall not certify any extension in allowable height that will adversely affect the entity's or the County's ISO rating.

(d) **Residential, Manufactured Housing Community:** The following standards apply to manufactured housing communities:

(1) **Maximum Density:** 8.7 dwelling units per net acre; provided that all residential lots must be of sufficient size to meet the requirements of the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control regarding the provision of water and sewerage service.

(2) **Minimum Yard Requirements:** The minimum setbacks from lot lines shall be:

Front yard	25 feet
Side yard	10 feet
Rear yard	25feet

The minimum distance between manufactured housing units located on the same lot (manufactured housing communities) shall be:

Side to Side	15 feet
Front to Front or Rear	30 feet
Rear to Rear	30 feet

(3) **Maximum Impervious Surface:** No more than 40% of any lot, or of the net acreage of a site, shall be covered by impervious surfaces; provided that this requirement will be superseded by specific development guidelines adopted by Dorchester County.

(4) **Minimum Lot Size:** Lots for manufactured housing communities shall be a minimum of five acres.

(e) **Office, Institutional and Commercial:** Structures categorized within Use Groups 6 through 18 in the MUC district shall be developed in accord with the lot and building requirements in Section 7.9 (CG district).

(f) **Industrial:** Structures categorized within Use Groups 19 through 24 in the MUC district shall be developed in accord with the lot and building requirements in Section 7.11 (Industrial District).

### 8.2.8 General Site Design Regulations

Site planning of parcels within the MUC district shall provide protection of the development from potentially adverse surrounding influences. Likewise, development in the MUC district shall not cause potentially adverse impacts on surrounding land uses. In particular:

(a) The pattern of development proposed for an individual tract within the district shall promote pedestrian movement within the development and minimize the land area devoted to motor vehicle travel.

- (b) Road, street, and lot layouts shall minimize alteration of natural site features, including vegetation and watercourses, by paralleling and preserving existing fence lines, tree lines and hedgerows.
- (c) Principal vehicular access points to a development shall be designed to encourage smooth traffic flow with controlled turning movements and minimum hazards to vehicular or pedestrian traffic. In general, streets internal to the development shall not be connected to roads providing principal access to the development in such manner or number that encourages use of internal streets by substantial amounts of through traffic.
- (d) A minimum of 25% of the land contained within a development in the MUC district shall be retained as open space, including floodplain, wetlands, common open space and active recreation uses designated for use by residents of the development.
- (e) Buildings shall not be located any closer than 100 feet from the right of way of a designated arterial road, 75 feet from the right of way of a designated major collector, and 20 feet from any other road right of way, private access easement, or prescriptive easement.

#### **8.2.9 Minimum Open Space Requirement**

All single-family attached and multi-family development, and manufactured housing communities shall provide a minimum 30% open space calculated from total net acreage. Areas used for stormwater ponds do not count toward the minimum requirement. Open space shall be perpetually preserved by means of open space easements and/or open space dedication statements on recorded plats. At least 25% of the open space shall include neighborhood parks, playgrounds and other active recreational uses. The 25% active open space requirement may be waived if the development is adjacent to a public park and/or is required to provide pedestrian connections to a public park. The waiver does not provide relief from the minimum 30% open space requirement.

**Section 8.3 RR, Rural Residential District**

**8.3.1 Statement of Intent**

The RR zoning district is intended to preserve the viability of existing agricultural operations and the integrity of wetlands, watercourses, other significant natural resource areas, as well as open space associated with agricultural activities as a primary use of land while allowing residential development and agriculturally related business operations as secondary uses. This district promotes application of clustered development principles as a means of achieving these goals.

**8.3.2 Use Groups Permitted**

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
1(a),(b)	Agricultural
2	Residential, Single-Family
6(a),(c)	Social and Cultural
23(d)	Utilities
24(a),(b),(c)	Community Services
25	Open Space

**8.3.3 Conditional Uses**

The following uses may be permitted in the RR zoning district provided they conform with the performance standards or conditions listed for each in Section 10.4.

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
1(c)	Agricultural
6(d)	Social and Cultural
7(a)	Business, Residential – Bed and Breakfasts
7(d)	Business, Residential
13(f)	Business, Recreation
19(b)	Transportation
23(c)	Utilities
<b>Accessory Uses:</b>	Accessory Dwelling Units Accessory Structures Home Occupation

**8.3.4 Special Exception Uses**

The following uses may be permitted in the RR zoning district upon approval of the Board of Zoning Appeals, provided they conform with any applicable performance standards or conditions listed for each in Section 10.4 pursuant to the criteria in Section 10.5 and the provisions in Section 14.5.

<b>Use Group No.</b>	<b>Group Name</b>
1(d)	Mineral Resource Extraction on lots at least 10 acres in area.
6(b)	Social and Cultural

### **8.3.5 Density Regulations**

Development density shall not exceed one principal dwelling unit on each legally platted lot or parcel of record; notwithstanding, additional dwelling units shall be permitted when a parcel is subject to a conservation easement with a qualified organization in which the conservation easement allows for more than one dwelling unit but limits additional subdivision, provided the development density shall not exceed one principal dwelling unit per three acres of land.

### **8.3.6 Minimum Lot and Building Requirements**

- (a) All lots must be a minimum of three (3) acres in area, provided they are of sufficient size to meet minimum requirements of the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control regarding the provision of water and sewer (septic) service.
- (b) All lots must be a minimum of 200 feet in width.
- (c) A minimum 50 foot setback from all property lines shall be provided for any building and/or structure.

### **8.3.7 Maximum Impervious Surface**

No more than 10% of the gross acreage of any lot shall be covered by impervious surfaces, with the exception of single family dwelling maximum impervious surfaces is 50 percent, provided that this requirement may be superseded by specific development guidelines adopted by Dorchester County.

### **8.3.8 Residential Clusters in the RR district**

Lots may be clustered within the RR zoning district subject to preliminary subdivision plan approval by the County's Planning Commission demonstrating the proposed reduction in lot sizes will result in the conservation of agriculture, usable open space and sensitive environmental resources for the benefit of residents.

#### **(1) Minimum Lot Sizes**

All cluster lots within the RR zoning district shall be a minimum of one (1) acre in size, provided however that they must be of sufficient size to meet the minimum requirements of the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control regarding the provision of water and sewer (septic) service.

(2) **Minimum yards**

Front Yard	25 feet
Side Yard	15 feet
Rear Yard	40 feet

(3) **Maximum Impervious Surface**

No more than 30% of the gross acreage of any cluster lot shall be covered by impervious surfaces, provided that this requirement may be superseded by specific development guidelines adopted by Dorchester County.

(4) **Minimum Open Space Area**

Open space shall be provided in a sufficient amount such that the gross density of one lot per three (3) acres is maintained, calculated on the overall parcel, excluding roads. Open space shall be preserved by means of a permanent open space easement acceptable to County Council.

(5) **Minimum Buffer**

A permanent natural vegetative buffer shall be provided where a cluster development in the RR zoning district adjoins an existing or planned residential district with a minimum allowable lot size greater than 43,560. Such buffer may be included in open space calculations, provided it is not located on an individual lot of record.

(6) **Clustered Lot Configurations**

Clustered lots to be developed in the RR zoning district shall be located in contiguous group of adjacent and fronting lots oriented towards each other on a street or designated open space area.