

Procedures for Incorporating Biodiversity Conservation into Site Plan Reviews



Hudsonia Ltd.

A. Assess how the project fits into the overall landscape.

- 1) **The municipal comprehensive plan:** Assess the project's compatibility with the comprehensive plan or other municipal documents that seek to guide development and identify important areas of growth and conservation.
 - a) Is the type and scale of the project compatible with the town plan?
 - b) If not, can it be modified to fit?
 - c) What parts of the town are considered most suitable for the type and scale of project?
- 2) **Population/cultural/commercial centers:**
 - a) Can the project be located in or adjacent to existing population centers? From a biodiversity standpoint, these will almost always be the best choices for siting new projects.
 - b) Can the project be located adjacent to other developed areas in the region of interest? From a biodiversity standpoint, these may be the next best choices.
- 3) **Landscape-scale habitat assessment:** Can the project avoid encroachments on large contiguous habitat areas, other known areas of conservation concern (streams, wetlands, floodplains, etc.), and the important links between those areas?

B. Assess the biological sensitivity of the proposed development area

- 1) **Areas of conservation concern:** Does the project avoid known areas of conservation concern such as: large forests, large meadows, wetlands, streams, floodplains, known occurrences of rare species or rare natural communities (NYNHP records), other biologically sensitive areas, active farmland or areas with farmland potential?
- 2) **Links between areas of conservation concern:** Does the project avoid fragmenting the landscape links between important conservation areas? Does the project provide appropriate buffers to sensitive areas?
- 3) **Species of conservation concern:** Does the project design accommodate the habitat needs of particular species of conservation concern known or expected to occur in the vicinity (e.g., grassland breeding birds, mole salamanders, brook trout, wood turtle, etc.)
- 4) **Conduct a field visit:** Use remote analysis to identify the areas of the project that require an on-the-ground look. Modify your decisions in steps A and B based on your field observations, as needed (e.g., if you discover an unmapped wetland, then add this to your concerns about habitat fragmentation and connection.)

(continued)

C. Assess other aspects of the project design relevant to local biodiversity.

1. Stormwater management:

- a. Can the volumes and timing of surface runoff from the site be maintained at pre-construction conditions?
- b. Can culverts and stream crossings be designed to maintain the integrity of stream flows, continuity of stream substrates, and safe travelways for stream organisms?

2. Lighting: Is outdoor lighting designed to minimize offsite impacts?

3. Other infrastructure: Are storm drains, pitfalls, curbs, and other features designed to minimize hazards to reptiles, amphibians, and other small animals?