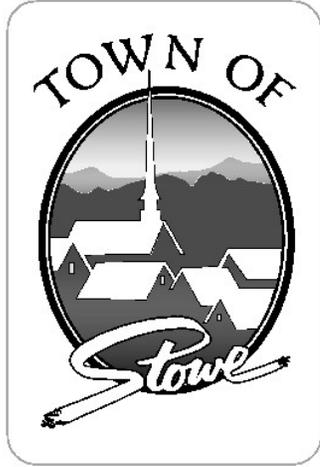


Preparing for a RHOD Review



Stowe Zoning Office
PO Box 216 ♦ Stowe VT 05672
802 / 253-6130

What is a RHOD Review?

The Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District (RHOD) includes properties located at higher elevations, steep slopes, and visually sensitive areas. Besides the normal review and approvals, the applicant is required to obtain Development Review Board (DRB) RHOD approval.

The purpose of the RHOD District is to protect the scenic and ecological resources associated with lands characterized by higher elevations, steep slopes, and visually sensitive areas in a manner that allows for carefully designed, low-impact development.

For the purposes of the RHOD review, vantage points are defined as maintained (class 3 or higher) public roads, state highways and municipal properties. In reviewing projects to determine compliance with RHOD standards, and to identify appropriate mitigation to ensure that a project does not result in an undue adverse impact on scenic resources, the DRB shall consider the relative importance of the vantage points from which the project is visible (affected vantage points). Such consideration shall

include the number of affected vantage points; the volume of traffic using the affected roads or highways; the length of time that a project would be viewed by motorists traveling on the affected roads or highways; the project's distance from affected vantage points; and, the visibility of the project from vantage points typically used by pedestrians and/or serving as public observation points.

RHOD Review Process

The development is first classified as "minor" or "significant" depending upon the visual impact. "Minor" projects require less information to be approved. Minor projects can sometimes be approved administratively "Significant" projects require a more significant visual analysis and additional materials and require DRB approval. The Zoning Administrator can advise the applicant on how to best prepare for this initial review. The Zoning Administrator and DRB will advise the applicant on additional items to submit based upon the individual project under review. DRB approval typically requires 4-6 weeks

The Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District (RHOD) regulations are available in the Zoning Regulations.

How to Prepare for the Initial RHOD Review

The applicant needs to prepare additional materials beyond the normal submittal in order to prepare for the initial review. The materials will be sent out to the DRB the week before the meeting. Nine copies of all RHOD materials are due one week prior to the hearing.

Materials required include:

- Site plan which shall provide adequate information necessary to review the proposed project, including a general indication of the location and design of proposed development; an indication of the physical characteristics of the development site, including areas characterized by steep slopes, existing and proposed drainage patterns and forested and open areas; proposed landscaping, clearing and forest management; road access and driveway location

- Proposed "no cut" zones in order to help reduce any visual impact
 - Elevations showing windows, lighting and height measurements
 - Glass coverage on primary view side (include cut sheet for window glass type)
 - Photographs from the site looking towards the view area in question
 - Photographs towards the site from any possible vantage points
 - Location map showing the site on a town road map
 - Aerial photograph showing general area (This will be provided by the Zoning Office.)
 - Lighting and cut sheets for any lights on the site
 - Documentation of roof and siding colors
 - Proximity of house site in relation to edge of slope
- In addition, an appointment should be scheduled with the Zoning Administrator to visit the site to help evaluate the visual impact. Please call 253-6130 to schedule an appointment. This is best scheduled before or right after submittal of the application in order for the Zoning Administrator to best assist you. The DRB will generally not make a decision regarding a RHOD review without a Zoning Administrator visit and evaluation.

Need help?

The Stowe Zoning Department will assist you with your development approvals. Assistance includes review of existing property zoning records, review of applicable regulations, and guidance regarding other approvals that may need to be obtained. A preliminary project review is available and can save time and costs before proceeding with final design work. The Stowe Zoning Ordinance and Development Application are available at the Zoning Office and on line.