

## RECOMMENDATION ON RIDGE-TOP REGULATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

With the help of the tax-assessors office the Ad-Hoc Committee on Ridge-Top Regulations was able to identify properties that could have an impact on visibility from lower elevations. By use of large-scale property division maps, we were able to pin-point how much properties would be affected by any type of regulations. These large scale maps of the affected areas are posted on the wall in room 433 for your review.

The next step we took was to see what best approach method to accomplish our task of protecting one of Blount County's assets. Here are our findings and recommendations:

- (1) Most of the ridge-tops from Walland Gap(highway 321) South is taken up by the Foothills Parkway of which no access can be granted, except "Top of The World" access, which is not visible. Most tracts of property below and facing the Maryville side of the Foothills Parkway has already been developed or does not have infrastructure to support any large scale development. Access to these areas would be questionable.
- (2) The area to the North side of Walland Gap(mostly the "three sisters tract" is deed-restricted. A variance from the BZA supports this, as housing has been approved on the Walland side and not visible from highway 321.
- (3) Most of the properties on both sides of highway 321 from Walland to Townsend already subdivided or protected as no access can be granted from the other section of the Foothills Parkway(under construction) to the Sevier Co. boundary.
- (4) After discussions with the Building Codes Dept., things such shiny roofs, downlighting, color of building, height of building, should not be addressed at this time. TCA 13-7-102 states that "all such regulations shall be uniform for class or kind of buildings throughout any such district, but the regulations in one district may differ from those in other districts. The reasons for having different regulations would have to meet the requirement of being for the health, safety and welfare of the affected area. "visually-subordinate" is not tied to any of the reasons for different regulations. It is questionable as to it's standing if tested in a court of law. Since most of these concerns are addressed in the preceeding paragraphs and in our recommendations, there is no need for any new or different regulations or codes. We do, however, recommend the following:
- (5) Do not create a separate zone for Ridge-Tops.
- (6) Include in Section 9
  - (a) Prohibit clear-cutting of trees (use guidelines as recommended by State of Tennessee's "Firewise" program.
  - (b) Require use of low-imp;act roads (explanation attached)
  - (c) Minimum of 20 ft. set-back on all buildings from property lines and roads
  - (d) Require "Buffers" between sub-divisions and public roads, where applicable.

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## Low Impact Road Construction

Low impact road construction is:

1. Simply following the contours of the terrain where possible.
2. Vertical cuts and 1-1/2 to 1 fills. Vertical cut to be made in stable materials such as rock, soft shale, etc. Unstable areas should be enhanced by rock gabions, landscape boulders, ground cover or vegetation, in addition to other methods used for soil stabilization.
3. Road grades higher than 16% should be allowed for short distances.

All the above will improve the visual impact of the road construction, because it will reduce the disturbed area as much as 75% in some cases. It also increases the stability of the subgrade making the road construction stronger.