

City Commission Policy 415 - Application of Best Management Practices for Residential Subdivisions Containing Significant Grades

DEPARTMENT: Growth Management

DATE ADOPTED: February 11, 2004

DATE OF LAST REVISION: N/A

415.01 AUTHORITY: Environmental Management Ordinance. Article III; Development Standards Section 5-61 – Predevelopment Reviews (b) (5) b. 1 significant grade area.

Standard. Except as noted in subsection (b)(5)b.2 of this section, a minimum of 50 percent of significant grade areas shall be left undisturbed and shall be placed in a conservation easement dedicated to the city. Development activity in the conservation easement is prohibited, except that vegetation management activities that enhance the vegetation and are specifically allowed in a vegetation management plan approved by the director may be permitted. Examples of vegetation management activities include, but are not limited to, pruning of dead and hazardous tree limbs and control of invasive vegetation.

The significant grades placed in a conservation easement shall be those significant grade areas that provide the greatest environmental benefit as determined by the director (i.e., provides downhill buffers, protects forested areas, buffers other protected conservation or preservation areas, or provides similar environmental benefits). In order to minimize topographic changes, development within the significant grade areas not placed in a conservation easement shall utilize off- grade construction (including stemwall construction), use best management practices (design the building to take advantage of the natural topography, etc.) and shall limit the height of retaining walls to 15 feet.

415.02 SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY: This policy shall apply to every residential subdivision in which significant grade slopes are delineated.

415.03 POLICY STATEMENT: In accordance with the City of Tallahassee's Comprehensive Plan and Environmental Management Ordinance (EMO), a minimum of 50 percent of all significant grades shall be left undisturbed and shall be placed in a conservation easement dedicated to the City. All significant grades, which are not placed in a conservation easement, shall be protected through the use of best management practices.

The term best management practices, as it relates to significant grades that are not placed in a conservation easement, shall be understood to require a grading plan that considers the impacts of stormwater runoff by minimizing any pollutants and turbidity, which may have the potential to leave the development site. Furthermore, the grading plan must assure the amount and velocity of stormwater leaving the site does not exceed the existing predevelopment conditions of the site. Best management practices, as described herein, shall be considered minimal grade changes under Section 5-66(a)(1) of the Land Development Code.

415.04 PROCEDURE: The 50 percent of the grades, which are to be placed in a conservation easement, shall not be impacted. All requests to impact the remainder of the grades shall be accompanied by a detailed grading plan which will demonstrate all stormwater to the maximum extent feasible will flow to a public or an approved private conveyance system. The grading plan must clearly validate that no additional impact beyond preexisting conditions will take place to any other parcel of ground.

415.05 ADMINISTRATION: This policy is adopted by the City Commission to be administered by the Director of the Growth Management Department in coordination with the Division of Land Use and Environmental Services.

415.06 EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2004