

§ 125-35. Open Space and Conservation - Planned Residential Development (OSC-PRD).

[Added 3-29-2003 ATM by Art. 32¹]

This section establishes and regulates Open Space and Conservation Planned Residential Development (OSC-PRD). Development under this section is pursuant to a special permit granted by the Planning Board.

- A. Purpose and intent.** The purpose and intent of the OSC-PRD provision is to permit high-quality residential development that preserves open space, water resources, wetlands, habitat, prime agricultural land, scenic landscapes and natural features, reduces infrastructure and site development cost, and promotes a diversity of housing opportunities within the Town, while respecting and enhancing neighborhoods, and promoting attractive standards of appearance and aesthetics consistent with Town character.
- (1) A further purpose of the OSC-PRD provision is to reduce the anticipated negative fiscal impact on the Town associated with conventional residential development.
 - (2) The OSC-PRD provision is designed to encourage the siting of homes in a manner that clusters units together in well-designed village settings, on buildable portions of the site, as a distinct alternative to the more arbitrary siting associated with lot by lot development typically reflected in plans submitted pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Sections 81K through 81GG, the Subdivision Control Law.
 - (3) The OSC-PRD will aid the Town in developing sustainable housing and associated infrastructure in harmony, as much as possible, with the Town's Climate Action Plan.
- B. Applicability.** The Planning Board may grant a special permit for an OSC-PRD on an Agricultural-Residential (AR) zoned tract of land with definite boundaries ascertainable from a recorded or registered deed(s) or recorded or registered plan(s). Existing public and private ways need not constitute boundaries of the tract, but the area within such ways shall not be counted in determining tract size.
- (1) **Permitted uses in Open Space and Conservation Planned Residential Development.** Permitted uses include the following:
 - (a) Single-family detached dwellings.

¹ Editor's Note: This article also repealed former § 125-35. Cluster development for open space conservation, added 3-31-1990 ATM by Art. 18, as amended.

- (b) Multi-family dwellings.
- (c) Agriculture and horticultural uses including but not limited to orchards, vineyards, forestry, farming for fruits and vegetables.
- (d) Open space.
- (e) Trails.
- (f) Passive outdoor recreation, cf. 301 Mass. Reg. 5.02.
- (g) Educational and religious uses and other uses not mentioned above which are exempt from regulation by zoning under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 3.
- (h) Accessory residential recreational uses (e.g., tennis court, pool, playground).
- (i) Active outdoor recreation, cf. 301 Mass. Reg. 5.02.

C. Requirements and process for approval. An applicant who is the owner (or with the permission of the owner) of land in the AR District as described above, may submit to the Planning Board a plan and application for a special permit for an OSC-PRD in accordance with the provisions of this section, excepting the building lots or lot shown on such plans from the lot area and other dimensional requirements specified in other sections of this Bylaw. While a subdivision plan is not required to be submitted in conjunction with the provisions of this section, in the event that a subdivision plan is being proposed by the applicant, such plan shall be submitted to the Planning Board in accordance with the Subdivision Rules and Regulations of the Planning Board.

- (1) **Submittal requirements.** Prior to the granting of a special permit pursuant to this section, a duly submitted application for said special permit shall be submitted together with a site plan to the Planning Board, in accordance with § 125-38, Site plans, of the Bylaw, and any Site Plan Rules and Regulations adopted by the Planning Board. For purposes of this Bylaw, a landscape architect, architect, land surveyor, and professional engineer must participate in the preparation of such site plan, which shall include the following:
 - (a) The location of the proposed development.
 - (b) The size of the site in acres.
 - (c) The total number of the proposed buildings and/or lots, and the size of each in square feet.

- (d) The acreage and proposed use of permanent open space.
- (e) A statement on the disposition or manner of ownership of the proposed open space.
- (f) The lots or areas which are to be used as building areas or lots, and the lots or areas which are to remain as permanent open space.
- (g) Lines showing yard and setbacks as required by this Bylaw, within which dwellings or structures must lie.
- (h) Sufficient detail of proposed built and natural features as described in § 125-35D and § 125-35E to enable the Planning Board to make the required determinations of § 125-35C(3).
- (i) A landscape preservation plan sheet(s) to be included with the site plan, reflecting the existing, natural features to be preserved and proposed landscape features and details.²
- (j) Site Development Climate Mitigation Plan. All features which are sustainable and designed to help mitigate climate impact should be included in this plan. This plan should specifically address, but not be limited to, the following areas.

[1]. Heating and Cooling. How the development will be heated and cooled. The plans to use heat pumps or a geothermal system to heat and cool the buildings. Electrification of all systems and appliances.

[2]. Energy Generation. Solar panels should be considered to the maximum extent. Include how much power they will provide both in absolute kilowatt-hours and as a percentage of the total electricity requirements.

[3]. Energy Use and Resource Use Minimization. Roofing, insulation and windows that minimize heat loss and cooling loss. LED lights should be installed in all common areas. Water-saving fixtures should be installed in units as well as for landscaping.

[4]. Parking. EV chargers installed with infrastructure to expand capacity based on anticipated growth. Include percentage of the anticipated automobile population that will be served by the chargers and the anticipated expansion readiness. Parking to be pervious to reduce runoff.

² Editor's Note: See Ch. 130, Subdivision Control.

[5]. Landscaping. Any trees removed from the site to be replaced with trees of equal size or compensated by more trees than removed. Shade trees be planted in areas to offset heat from parking areas. Drought-tolerant and native plants to be used in the landscaping.

[6]. Site Infrastructure. Composting and recycling stations available to all residents. Rain water collection site to reduce water usage.

- (2) **Submittal of preliminary plan.** An applicant must submit a plan of the required form and content standards as a "Preliminary Plan" in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Section 81S and Harvard Planning Board governing laws for Subdivision Plans. Such plan, although not a formal subdivision plan filing, and submitted for conceptual purposes only, shall include a perimeter survey prepared by a registered land surveyor, location of wetlands, and topography based upon the most recent United States Geological Survey map. The applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that a subdivision plan, if formally filed, would be buildable without reliance on significant waivers of the subdivision regulations.
- (3) **Approval criteria.** After notice and a public hearing in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 9, 11, and 15 and after following the procedure outlined in this Bylaw, the Planning Board may grant such a special permit with any conditions, safeguards, and limitations, if it determines:
 - (a) That the application form and content referred to in § 125-35C(1), herein is properly completed.
 - (b) That the site plan referred to in § 125-35C(1) is properly completed.
 - (c) That all the other requirements of this Section and Bylaw are fully met.
 - (d) That the design and layout of the proposed OSC-PRD preserves open space for conservation and recreation; that it preserves natural features of the land; allows more efficient provision of streets, utilities and other public services; and, that it provides a high degree of design quality, based on the criteria and considerations enumerated herein in § 125-35E.
 - (e) That if development of single family homes is being proposed on separate lots, as opposed to a clustered village concept that is a major objective of this Bylaw, exemplary site planning is demonstrated, and other determinations in § 125-35D, are met.

D. Design criteria. In its consideration of an OSC-PRD, the Planning Board shall give particular attention to, and shall use as a basis for its decision, all of the following:

- (1) Lots, streets, off-street parking, sidewalks, pathways and buildings which achieve the harmonious integration of the proposed development with surrounding properties.
- (2) Overall layout and design that achieves the relationship between the proposed development and the land under consideration.
- (3) Appropriately sized and configured open spaces for active or passive recreation, and where possible, links to adjoining common open space areas.
- (4) Protection of natural features such as streams, mature trees or clusters of trees, rock outcrops, bluffs, slopes, high points, views, vistas, and historic or archeological features.
- (5) Provision of buffer areas, composed of existing vegetation, to surround building groupings and building envelope areas, to discourage site clearing and encourage preservation of existing land cover and mature vegetation.
- (6) Provision of accessibility to open spaces for all, consistent with Massachusetts Architectural Access Board 521 CMR Accessibility Guidelines.
- (7) Use of open spaces for preserving, enhancing, or providing scenic vistas; preservation and protection of historic resources.
- (8) Adequacy of provisions for public safety, protection from fire and flood, and maintenance of public facilities, streets, utilities, and open space.
- (9) Consistent with the Town of Harvard Climate Action Plan, with sufficient conservation and sustainability in the design of the development.

E. Design quality. Project design for an OSC-PRD shall be reviewed by the Planning Board with input from Town officials, any review consultant(s), and others as appropriate. This section is to be interpreted as guidelines to be applied flexibly by the Planning Board as appropriate to the situation under review, including factors such as foundation and soil characteristics and other extraordinary site constraints. While these guidelines apply to all site improvements and buildings and structures, it is not the intent of this section to prescribe or proscribe use of materials or methods of construction regulated by the state building code, but rather to enhance the appearance of the built environment within an OSC-PRD.

- (1) **Building and structure placement.** The placement of buildings and structures in an OSC-PRD should:

- (a) Provide for maximum buffering of buildings and structures to adjoining properties either within the proposed OSC-PRD or to adjacent land uses. Such buffering includes, but is not limited to: landscaping, screening materials, natural barriers, fencing, and related measures.
 - (b) Preserve attractive views from major vantage points, especially from major thoroughfares and residential neighborhoods.
 - (c) Avoid regular spacings and building placements that will be viewed as continuous walls from important vantage points, which may be identified in an OSC-PRD pre-application conference.
 - (d) Avoid the placement of structures, common area facilities, and private space related to individual units in a manner that eclipses views or access to open space areas described in § 125-35K.
 - (e) Ensure that an appropriate number of units are designed to be fully accessible consistent with Massachusetts Architectural Access Board 521 CMR Accessibility Guidelines. If greater than 4 but fewer than 10 units, one unit must be accessible. If greater than 10 and fewer than 19, two units must be made accessible. For more than 20 units, 10% must be made accessible. .
- (2) **Building massing/articulation.** The massing/articulation of buildings should:
- (a) Avoid unbroken building facades longer than 50 feet.
 - (b) Provide human-scale features, especially for pedestrians and at lower levels.
 - (c) Avoid unarticulated and monotonous building facades and window placement.
- (3) **Building appearance and treatment.** To the extent not inconsistent with or pre-empted by the state building code, the following should be considered as applicable:
- (a) Materials and building treatments that reduce the visibility of the buildings from distant vantage points, and that are compatible with backgrounds and surroundings.
 - (b) Materials and colors compatible with other quality buildings of similar scale in the vicinity.

- (c) Green building technologies and materials, wherever possible, to minimize adverse environmental impacts.

(4) **Roofline articulation.** The design of buildings should:

- (a) Provide a variety of building heights and varied roofline articulation that stresses New England vernacular architecture.
- (b) Locate taller buildings away from major streets, abutting and off-site single-family residential areas and homes.

(5) **Landscaping.** Landscaping criteria are as follows:

- (a) All open areas, exclusive of areas to remain in an existing natural state within an OSC-PRD, should be landscaped in an appropriate manner, utilizing both natural and man-made materials such as indigenous grasses, trees, shrubs, and other appropriate elements.
- (b) Deciduous trees should be placed along new and existing streets and ways. Outdoor lighting should be considered in the landscaping plan, and should be designed to complement both man-made and natural elements of the OSC-PRD and adjacent areas.
- (c) Intensive, high-quality landscaping or preservation of existing vegetation should be provided within the OSC-PRD where it abuts major streets, existing residential areas, and along internal drives.
- (d) Preservation of existing vegetation or tree-lined areas should be maintained.
- (e) Parking areas and lots should use landscaping and terracing to break up large areas of pavement and to enhance residential flavor and appearance; trees and shrubs should be used to the maximum extent feasible.
- (f) Features such as shade trees, forest trees, and expansive planting areas should be preserved and/or introduced along external property boundaries and on the perimeter of the OSC-PRD itself, to buffer the site from adjoining parcels.
- (g) Any lighting in the proposed development shall comply with Lighting Bylaw §125-40.

F. Utilities. To the maximum extent feasible, all utilities should be located underground.

G. Signage. All signs shall comply with Protective Bylaw § 125-41. However, within the development, signs, not to exceed two square-feet each, of a number and location to be approved as part of the OSC-PRD, may be permitted for the sole purposes of orientation and direction, and of identifying common building spaces.

H. Base development density. The maximum number of dwelling units per acre permitted in an OSC-PRD shall not exceed two units per acre of land area, and in no event exceed the maximum number of lots or dwelling units obtainable under a conventional subdivision plan for the land area under consideration, except as provided in § 125-35I.

I. Development incentive.

(1) The Planning Board may authorize an increase in lots or dwelling units up to a maximum of ten units per acre. Increased permissible density will be allocated as the following conditions are met:

(a) Additional Open Space Preservation

[1] The applicant proposes a significant increase in open space above 50%, and preserves significant natural resources.

[2] There is permanent preservation of land devoted or set aside for agricultural use or other unique preservation strategy, including preservation of historic structures or barns, or other special features of the built environment.

(If (a)[1] or (a)[2] above are found to be satisfied, in the opinion of Planning Board, it may authorize a 2 unit per acre increase over base density.)

(b) The applicant proposes public improvements or amenities that result in substantial benefit to the Town and the general public, provided:

[1] There are significant improvements to the environmental quality or condition of the site and its surrounding areas, including a decrease in stormwater runoff from what would otherwise result from a conventional subdivision plan.

[2] There are provisions contributing to off-site public facilities or environmental improvements beyond those necessary to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development.

(If (b)[1] and (b)[2] above are found to be satisfied, in the opinion of Planning Board, it may authorize a 1.5 unit per acre increase over base density.)

- (c) Housing units for senior citizens and persons aged 55 years and over housing is provided. Such units should conform to §125-57E, Age Appropriate Design.

(If (c) above is found to be satisfied, in the opinion of Planning Board, it may authorize a 1.5 unit per acre increase over base density.)

- (d) The applicant sets aside 15% or more of lots or dwelling units on the site for Affordable Housing for purchase or rental by those with households of low or moderate incomes. Such units must count toward the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory, and be in accordance with the provisions of 760 CMR 45.00, as may be amended. The Planning Board shall review and approve the actual percentage distribution of qualifying low versus moderate income units.

(If (d) above is found to be satisfied, in the opinion of Planning Board, it may authorize a 2 unit per acre increase over base density.)

- (e) Units are designed to conform with Passive Haus Design standards.

(if (e) above is found to be satisfied, in the opinion of the Planning Board, it may authorize a 3 unit per acre increase over base density).

- (f) The development incorporates at least five elements of environmentally conscious design including, but not limited to heat pump/geothermal climate controls, smart windows, solar panels, smart outlets, LED lighting, substantial use of pervious pavement, conservation-minded landscaping, and low-flow water fixtures.

(If (f) above is found to be satisfied, in the opinion of Planning Board, it may authorize a 1.5 unit per acre increase over base density.)

Condition	Units per acre	Additional Units per acre
Base Density	2	
(a) Additional Open Space Preservation		2
(b) Substantial Benefit to Town		1.5
(c) Senior Housing		1.5
(d) Affordable Housing		2
(e) Passive Haus		3

Condition	Units per acre	Additional Units per acre
(f) Environmentally Conscious		1.5
Maximum Density if all conditions met	10	

J. Dimensional requirements. The following provisions shall apply:

- (1) The Planning Board may waive the minimum requirements for frontage and/or yard requirements that would normally be applicable to land within the AR District in order to achieve maximum open space area, and may permit more than one single or two-family dwelling be located on a lot in an OSC-PRD, as provided below.
- (2) The parcel proposed for development must have a minimum of 50 feet of frontage on a public way or private way which is open to the public.
- (3) The minimum distance between clusters of multiple unit dwellings, shall be 50 feet.
- (4) A minimum width of 150 feet of landscaped area shall be established and maintained between any property adjacent to the OSC-PRD and the nearest dwelling unit or units in the OSC. [Amended 4-2-2005 ATM by Art. 34]
- (5) The minimum setback from internal roads shall be 25 feet.
- (6) The maximum height of proposed buildings shall be 35 feet, and shall not exceed 3 stories.
- (7) Except as provided in this Bylaw, any lot in an OSC-PRD shall comply with any other dimensional requirements of the zoning district in which it is located.

K. Common open space. A minimum of 50% of the OSC-PRD parcel shall be devoted to contiguous open space, completely devoid of any structure, parking, loading and unloading space, access ways thereto, or as private yards, patios, or gardens for the exclusive or principal use by residents of individual dwelling units. To the greatest extent possible, such open space shall be left in its undisturbed natural condition or shall be appropriate in size, shape, dimension, location, and character to assure its use as a conservation area, and where appropriate, a recreational area, and be a visual and natural amenity for the development and the Town. The common open space described herein is in substitution of and supersedes any other reference to common open space that may be described elsewhere in the Bylaw.

- (1) **Open space criteria.** The following criteria define open space, and open space that is considered usable for outdoor recreation within an OSC-PRD parcel:
 - (a) No more than 25% of common open space in an OSC-PRD shall be wetlands and wetland buffer.
 - (b) Unless approved by the Planning Board, common open space shall not be considered usable if the slope of the finished grade exceeds 33%.
 - (c) No common open space shall be considered usable unless it is compact and contiguous and has no dimension of less than 50 feet.
 - (d) All usable open space shall be open to the sky and pervious.

L. Open space conveyance.

- (1) The common open space shall be conveyed in the following ways as approved by the Planning Board:
 - (a) To a corporation or trust comprising a homeowners association whose membership includes the owners of all lots or units contained in the development. The developer shall include in the deed to owners beneficial rights in said open land, and shall grant a perpetual open space restriction to the Town of Harvard or a non-profit corporation or organization over such land to insure that it be kept in an open state and not be built upon for residential use, or developed for accessory uses such as parking or roadways. Such restriction shall be in such form and substance as the Planning Board shall prescribe, and may contain such additional restrictions on development and use of the open space as the Planning Board may deem appropriate.
 - (b) To a non-profit organization, the principal purpose of which is the conservation of open space. The developer or non-profit organization shall grant an open space restriction as set forth above.
 - (c) To the Town for a park or open space use, subject to the approval of the Select Board, for management by the Park and Recreation Commission if a park, otherwise by the Conservation Commission, with a clause insuring that it be maintained as open space. [Amended 10-22-2018 STM by Art. 2]
- (2) **Multiple conveyance.** To provide flexibility, and when deemed in the public interest, the Planning Board may approve more than one organization to accept the open space conveyance, particularly when it is appropriate that a major portion of such land be conveyed to the Town or a non-profit

conservation organization, and another portion of such land is more appropriately conveyed to an owners association.

M. Passageways. Private roadways and common driveways shall be allowed in OSCPRD parcels. While roadway surface widths may be narrower than widths associated with a traditional subdivision, the durability of passageway surfaces and subsurfaces must be comparable to those in a conventional subdivision. [Amended 4-2-2005 ATM by Art. 34]

- (1) **Criteria for passageways.** The following criteria shall guide the development of these passageways:
 - (a) Cleared widths for traveled ways (excluding on-street parking spaces and passing turnouts) shall not be more than 22 feet or less than 12 feet. A cleared height of not less than 16 feet above the entire passageway shall be established and maintained.
 - (b) Drainage and surface runoff from all passageways must be suitably accommodated by an approved drainage system, using best management practices.
 - (c) All OSC-PRD plans shall specify that such passageways will not be dedicated to the Town, but are to remain private ways; all deeds or other instruments conveying any portion of land or structure in an OSC-PRD containing such a passageway(s), shall specify that such passageway(s) are and shall remain private way(s);

N. Site improvements. Site improvements specific to an OSC-PRD are listed below. To assist the Planning Board's evaluation of site changes and improvements from any OSC-PRD plan, the applicant shall submit said plan to the Town's Conservation Commission and Board of Health for review and recommendations to the Planning Board.

- (1) **Water supply.** Each lot and the development in its entirety shall be served by water supply systems.
- (2) **Sewage disposal.** Privately owned and maintained on-site sewage disposal or treatment systems may be approved to serve buildings and lots in an OSCPRD, if owned, maintained, operated, and monitored by a residents association, notwithstanding the provisions of § 125-32D of this Bylaw, if such treatment facility or system is approved by the Board of Health and in compliance with the requirements of Title 5, 310 CMR 15.00, or approved in accordance with the requirements of 314 CMR 5.00 (the Ground Water Discharge Permit Program). An approved system may be located on land owned in common by the owners of the building lots or residential units within the development.

- (3) **Parking.** Unless otherwise approved by the Planning Board, a maximum of 1.5 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for each unit, exclusive of spaces within garages. The Planning Board may also approve, based upon the nature of the development proposed and exclusive of the 1.5 parking space ratio provided, areas for visitor parking.
 - (4) **Storm runoff control.** The applicant shall demonstrate that, as compared with the situation that would exist on the site without the development, no phase of the proposed OSC-PRD will result in an increase in the peak rate of storm runoff at the parcel boundary for the OSC-PRD as a whole for the 25-, 50- and 100-year design storms, and that there will be no net loss in flood storage capacity for the 100-year design storm. In making such determinations, any state or local orders or requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act or the Town's Wetlands Protection Bylaw³ shall be assumed in the calculations of runoff and flood storage without the OSC-PRD, but alternative forms of development shall not be assumed.
 - (5) **On-site runoff and erosion control.** The applicant shall demonstrate that any adverse existing off-site runoff and erosion conditions or off-site runoff and erosion conditions which would result from the development of the OSC-PRD, are fully identified and that workable and acceptable mitigation measures are proposed as part of the submission of a final plan, consistent with .§ 125-58 herein;
- O. Residents association.** In order to ensure that common open space and common facilities within the development will be properly maintained, each OSC-PRD shall have a residents association, which may be in the form of a corporation, non-profit organization, or trust, established in accordance with appropriate State law by a suitable legal instrument or instruments properly recorded with the Worcester County Registry of Deeds or registered in the Worcester County Registry District of the Land Court. As part of the final OSC-PRD site plan submission, the applicant shall supply to the Planning Board copies of such proposed instruments, which shall at a minimum provide the information required by said OSC-PRD submission requirements, § 125-35L of this Bylaw, and Site Plan Rules and Regulations in effect at the time of final submission.
- (1) **Responsibilities of the residents association.** Said legal instruments pertaining to the residents association shall specify that the residents association shall be solely responsible for all related improvements, and all costs associated with the operation of the development, including:
 - (a) Roadway maintenance.

³ Editor's Note: See Ch. 119, Wetlands Protection.

(b) Snow-plowing.

(c) Maintenance of street lighting and on-site improvements and utilities.

P. Amendments without public hearing. Following the granting of a special permit pursuant to this Section, the Planning Board may, upon application and for good cause shown, without public hearing, amend the OSC-PRD plan solely to make changes in lot lines shown on the plan, which lot lines are not part of the perimeter of the site, or other minor engineering changes, provided, however, that no such amendment shall:

- (1) Grant any reduction in the size or change in location of the open space as provided in the permit;
- (2) Grant any change in the layout of the ways as provided in the permit;
- (3) Increase the number of lots or units as provided in the permit; or
- (4) Decrease other dimensional requirements of any lot below the minima permitted by the approval of the initial site plan and special permit.

Q. Amendments requiring public hearing. Any proposed change to an existing OSC-PRD special permit considered substantial by the Planning Board, shall require notice and a formal public hearing in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 9, 11, and 15 and an amendment to the special permit decision made pursuant to this section.