

Harvard's Proposed

Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Bylaw

See a summary of what the OSRD Bylaw proposes to accomplish below and please visit the project website at:

<https://www.harvard-ma.gov/planning-board/pages/open-space-residential-design-osrd-bylaw>

What is Open Space Residential Development?

Open Space Residential Cluster Development (sometimes called Natural Resource Protection Developments), are developments that prioritize the preservation of open spaces. By promoting compact residential developments communities can preserve and enhance their rural town character by protecting open space, natural resources, and farmland.

What is the need for Harvard's OSRD Bylaw?

Growth in Harvard, as in many of our region's small cities and towns, has largely consisted of large lot single family home subdivisions. This can result in sprawling residential developments, the clearing of large swaths of woodlands, and the conversion of farmland for single family homes. This can result in the loss of natural resources and contribute to the loss of Harvard's small town identity. At the same time, new residential development tends to consist of very large homes, be unaffordable to many, and be indistinguishable from subdivisions across the region. Developing the OSRD were based on recommendations cited in the Town's 2016 Master Plan, 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan, and 2017 Housing Production Plan

How does the OSRD Bylaw work?

At its most basic provision, the OSRD requires a minimum of 50% of the land area to be permanently preserved, at least half of which must be upland. This by-right option allows for

reduced lot dimensions and a predictable yield of homes based upon an established formula.

To construct deed-restricted affordable housing, the OSRD through special permit allows for "bonuses" of additional market-rate homes. In order to ensure density does not exceed the Town's desire for context-sensitive development, the amount of the bonuses is capped from the base formula. In order to take advantage of the bonuses, the average home size cannot exceed 1,200 square feet and no more than 1/3 of the homes can have 3 bedrooms (or more). The smaller homes, combined with a slight further reduction in minimum lot size and setback requirements, as well as allowing shared driveways and parking, will help to create distinct, walkable developments that preserve open space and create housing for seniors, empty nesters, and others.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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