
STURBRIDGE OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BYLAW

PROPOSED REVISIONS FAQ

BASICS

Is this a new bylaw? No, Sturbridge has an Open Space Residential Development Bylaw, Chapter 17, in the Sturbridge Zoning bylaw. The Planning Board is considering amendments to the existing bylaw to improve its functionality and use.

Purpose for Revisions: Sturbridge anticipates continued residential development interest and would like to make a development method that preserves meaningful open space and protects resources more attractive to developers than the basic subdivision plan.

What is an OSRD bylaw? Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) is a creative land use technique that accommodates residential growth while preserving at least 50% of the parcel as meaningful open space in perpetuity.

The Purpose of an OSRD bylaw: The primary purposes for this bylaw are to encourage flexibility and creativity in the design of residential developments and to encourage a less sprawling and more efficient form of development that consumes less open land and conforms to existing topography and natural features better than traditional subdivisions. Appropriate OSRD will facilitate the permanent preservation of meaningful open space and help to maintain the Town's traditional New England character and land use development pattern.

Will a developer still be able to submit a basic subdivision plan? Yes. The existing OSRD bylaw and proposed amendments to the bylaw would still allow OSRD as an optional development method.

Where can an OSRD be built? The existing OSRD bylaw allows an OSRD to be built in the Rural Residential, Suburban Residential and Special Use Zoning Districts.

CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE OSRD AS THE PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT METHOD

- Single family detached homes would be allowed by-right in an OSRD rather than the existing special permit approach.
- The ten acre minimum tract requirement for an OSRD would be eliminated.
- The 100 foot buffer requirement along public ways would be eliminated.

CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE GREATER HOUSING DIVERSITY AND DESIGN CREATIVITY

The proposed amendments seek to encourage attractive, creative developments through reduced or modified dimensional requirements and greater housing variety.

The existing OSRD bylaw only allows single family detached homes and two family homes by special permit; however, single family dwellings, two family dwellings, multifamily dwellings, and accessory dwelling units are allowed by right or by special permit in the underlying zoning districts. The proposed amendments would allow:

- Single family detached dwellings by right
- Single family attached dwellings by special permit
- Two family dwellings by special permit
- Multi family dwellings by special permit
- Accessory dwelling units by special permit

Residential density would not change for allowed uses with proposed amendments to this bylaw. In no case will the number of permitted dwelling units in an OSRD exceed that which would be permitted under a conventional ("grid") subdivision that complies with the Town Zoning Bylaw and the Subdivision Rules and Regulations.

TABLE SHOWING EXISTING MINIMUM LOT SIZE (DENSITY) REQUIRMENTS

	Other Requirements	1 acre RR Minimum Lot Size	¾ acre SR Minimum Lot Size	½ acre SR Minimum Lot Size
Single Family Detached	None	1 du/ac	1.5 du/ac	2 du/ac
Single Family Attached	None	1 du/ac	1.5 du/ac	2 du/ac
Two Family	20,000 sq.ft per unit	2 du / ac	2 du/ac	2 du/ac
Multi family	20,000 sq.ft per unit	2 du/ac	2 du/ac	2 du/ac

Proposed amendments do allow for multi family dwellings to have more than four dwelling units and for developments to have more than one multifamily dwelling; however, this proposed amendment does not change baseline residential density for multifamily housing. The proposed amendments also suggest capping the number of dwelling units in a multi family dwelling to eight dwelling units in order to retain a small scale development character.

The existing OSRD bylaw allows for reduced lot size, unit placement, shape, and other dimensional requirements. The proposed amendments make little change to these requirements. However, the following amendments are proposed to foster even greater creativity in site design for building placement:

- The 30 foot building-to-building setback requirement would be eliminated

- The side yard requirement for dwellings that shares a common wall with an adjacent dwelling would be eliminated
- The Planning Board would be provided the ability to further reduce the side yard requirements if conditions justify doing so, provided the reduction is consistent with the intent of the bylaw.

The proposed amendments to the OSRD also assist with delineating development requirements for lots along existing roadways and internal roadways.

TABLE SHOWING PROPOSED AND EXISTING FRONTAGE AND SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

	Existing Roads	Internal Roads
Frontage	Existing requirement of underlying district.	Minimum 50 feet of frontage
Front Setback	Existing requirement of underlying district.	Minimum 20 feet
Side Setback	Existing requirement of underlying district.	Minimum 10 feet
Rear Setback	Existing requirement of underlying district.	Minimum 10 feet

WHAT'S NOT BEING PROPOSED FOR REVISION?

- Purpose and intent of Bylaw
- Application and other procedural requirements
- Site specific design standards
- **Density of residential development**
- Open space requirements
- Provisions that allow for an increase in permissible density
- Decision making procedures and criteria

OTHER PROPOSED CHANGES

- The existing term "Single family dwelling" would need to be updated throughout the entire Sturbridge Zoning Bylaw to "single family detached dwelling."
- Single family attached dwelling would need to be defined in Chapter Two: Definitions, and would need to be allowed by Special Permit in an OSRD in Chapters Five and Six.
- Single family attached, two family dwelling, and multi family dwelling would need to be allowed by Special Permit in an OSRD in Chapter 14.