

**Growth Management Strategies:
A Presentation to the North Shore Open Space Network
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Limited Development. A municipality or land trust works with a developer to limit the number of units and design of development to protect important conservation resources (scenic views, important wetlands habitat, wildlife corridors, etc.) Sometimes requires subsidy from municipality or non-profit to ensure a truly “limited” outcome. Optimum outcomes can require the use of creative planning and zoning tools.

Open Space Residential Design. Open Space Residential Design (OSRD) is a method of planning residential development that conserves open space in a new subdivision. The same number of homes as would be permissible in a conventionally-zoned subdivision are allowed using OSRD. OSRD sets aside open space based on resource values, not by formula. OSRD, unlike some cluster bylaws, is written to ease the approval process, making the approval process for OSRD less cumbersome and on par with the approval process for conventional subdivisions. OSRD offers an alternative to development, by using a four step planning process that reverses the typical subdivision planning process. First, the open space is designated; second, the houses are sited; third the roads and trails are planned; and fourth, the lot lines are drawn. The preserved open space is protected permanently through a conservation restriction.

Inclusionary Zoning. Inclusionary zoning is a land-use tool in which local ordinances require builders to include a certain amount of housing for low- and moderate-income households. While not a land preservation tool per se, inclusionary zoning can be used for building reuse projects and infill, thus helping communities reach affordable housing targets without being subject to 40B developments that destroy important resource-rich properties.

Friendly 40Bs. While most towns find themselves reacting to unwanted 40B’s planned for parcels that perhaps should not be developed, some towns have used 40B to their advantage. Several communities have worked with developers to do projects that combine open space and affordable housing. 40B is used to allow higher densities on a

portion of a parcel while preserving important resource areas. In many cases, towns purchase parcels and then issue an RFP for a developer to do a 40B. This allows the town to control the development process and dictate areas for land preservation. The use of Chapter 40B can also facilitate adaptive re-use projects with affordable housing components.

Community Preservation Act. The CPA allows communities to establish a local real estate tax surcharge to set aside money for open space preservation, affordable housing and historic preservation. Money collected locally is matched by state funding derived from recording fees at county Registries of Deed. Many towns are undertaking projects that combine more than one of the categories for which CPA funds can be used.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). TDR refers to a method for protecting land by transferring the “rights to develop” from one area (e.g., the sending area) and giving them to another area (the receiving area). This tool allows for the protection of key resources, and the concentration of development in areas where density and mixed uses are desired. Plymouth, Groton and Amherst are three communities that have TDR bylaws on the books.

Village Center Overlay Districts. A cornerstone of smart growth is the concentration of activity in already developed areas with existing municipal services. Village center overlay districts achieve this goal by allowing denser development and a mix of uses in town centers. Design guidelines are employed to create a pedestrian friendly environment. By concentrating development in areas with existing infrastructure, and encouraging “walkability”, towns can accommodate development without compromising important resource areas.

Low Impact Development. LID is an approach to environmentally friendly land use planning. It includes a suite of landscaping and design techniques that attempt to maintain the natural, pre-developed ability of a site to manage rainfall. LID techniques capture water on site, filter it through vegetation, and let it soak into the ground where it can recharge the local water table rather than being lost as surface runoff. An important LID principle includes the idea that stormwater is not merely a waste product to be disposed of, but rather that rainwater is a resource. See the state web site on LID at <http://www.mass.gov/envir/lid/default.htm>.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD). TOD is mixed-use, higher density, pedestrian friendly development within walking distance of a transit station. It is characterized by compact land development, a good pedestrian environment, public amenities, parking management, good transit service, and strong connectivity between transit and development. TOD is often encouraged through the adoption of a TOD overlay district within walking distance of a transit station.