

## 40R Smart Growth Overlay District Community Discussion

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Present: Planning Board Members Chairman Ron Mastrogiacomo, Members Loren Coons, Christine Delisio, Andrea Fish, Mary Foley, Christopher Olney, Gary Russell; Town Planner Sue Brown

Also present: Invited Guest Bill Reyelt, Department of Housing and Community Development

**September 24, 2019, 7 PM**  
**MERHS Learning Commons**

The 40 R Smart Growth Overlay District Community Discussion was hosted by the Manchester Planning Board to begin a community discussion about what a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District is, and whether it is a planning option for guiding development in the Limited Commercial District.

About 30 Residents and other stakeholders took part in the first community discussion. PB Chair Ron Mastrogiacomo welcomed community members, PB member Gary Russel provided opening remarks about the purpose and the process for the meeting and introduced DHCD representative Bill Reyelt who provided a program overview and answered questions. Those attending discussed a number of issues relating to how a SGOD is created, its purpose and benefits and the development potential and challenges in the LCD.

Following are notes that reflect the discussion points of the meeting.

- The overall goal of a SGOD is housing production using smart growth principles. (increase affordable housing, mix land uses, compact design, distinctive/attractive, preserving environmental resources, strengthen communities, improve transportation choices, development decisions predicable, fair, and cost effective)
- Subsidies provided by a SGOD are based on the number of housing units that “can be built” under the SGOD Regulations AND by number of housing units “built”. Subsidy funds must be used by the Town for Capital Projects
- A 40S payment (paid to offset costs of new students to a school district) can go to a Town with a Regional School District (MERSD).
- Bedroom restrictions are not allowed in a SGOD. (A town cannot require only single bedroom units)
- The source of 40R and 40S payments has been stable for some time, but is dependent on legislation.
- Design standards are determined by a community, however the State identifies what type of elements can be mandated.

- MassWorks funding can be accepted by a Town looking to create infrastructure to support a 40R SGOD. Town's receive extra points on MassWorks funding applications if they have a SGOD.
- Adequate infrastructure is required for a SGOD. It can exist or it can be practicably upgraded (it can reasonably be developed).
- If adequate infrastructure is not in place at the time of the SGOD application, the Town can receive conditional approval. Subsidy payments are held until the infrastructure is adequately planned.
- The Town would want to see a mix of uses in the Limited Commercial District to create services that support householders.
- The Smart Growth Overlay District program looks at services that are reasonable accessible outside the site.
- Statewide, there have been two assisted living developments in Overlay Zoning Districts.
- The Town should/could consider a Senior Center as one of the uses in a SGOD.
- A specific site has not been identified as a potential SGOD, however through the Master Planning process, the Limited Commercial District was identified as having a strong potential for guided growth.
- Guided growth in the LCD could help the Town increase diversity in its housing stock, help protect natural resources, and increase tax revenue
- Care should be taken to assure that the cost of services do not outweigh the revenue potential of any development.
- The General District seems like a natural area to consider a SGOD.
- Other areas such as the existing DPW site should also be considered.

Gary Russell, on behalf of the Planning Board thanked everyone for attending to learn about SGODs and sharing their thoughts about their feasibility in Manchester.

The next step is for the Planning Board to vote on whether to move forward with further exploring the feasibility of an SGOD in the LCD. This would likely include working with the community and the state to determine if a site in the LCD would meet state requirements, determine appropriate uses, assess feasibility of desired development, assess potential community impacts, and consider regulations that would adequately guide any development.

Meeting notes submitted by Sue Brown, Town Planner