

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POCD CHAPTER 11  
NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS AND POLICIES

RE: Avon Old Farms School Property

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## **Chapter 11** Neighborhood Goals and Policies

### Neighborhood 6

- This neighborhood contains the largest remaining tract of undeveloped land in Avon and is owned by the Avon Old Farms School. These parcels are of high priority for acquisition by the town. The Town should continue to pursue negotiations to purchase this land in order to preserve it as open space. Additional options which would also have the effect of ~~maintaining~~ **preserving** this **as undeveloped** land ~~as open space~~ include acquisition of development rights or dedication of a conservation easement.
- A design for the reconstruction **and relocation** of Old Farms Road, **which has been proposed since the early 1980's** is being finalized. A new alignment for a section of the road in the vicinity of the school campus will shift the road to the south. (See Map 11, Plan of Circulation) This will provide an opportunity to define a new ~~core campus~~ northerly of the new alignment. See area shaded in blue on the Future Land Use Plan contained in the pocket of this report. ~~Any development of property owned by the school would first require a change of zone. Commercial or industrial uses are not appropriate here. Low density residential development would be the most appropriate. Because of the availability of public water and sewer there is a unique opportunity to develop a carefully planned cluster development. This would provide an opportunity preserve significant areas of open space. The construction of a modest number of multi-family, active adult or congregate care housing units may also be appropriate at a density which would be equivalent to that of a low density single family subdivision. At a minimum, a corridor of open space along Old Farms Road should be preserved.~~

#### Add the following text:

**In 2008 Avon Old Farms School commissioned a master plan study in response to Town inquiries regarding possible preservation of some of the School land. This study:**

- **depicted the Town's planned relocation of Old Farms Road to the south;**
- **identified an area to expand "Core Campus" and other school-related facilities, should the School choose to do so; and**
- **analyzed the potential for single-family residential development on some of the land.**

**While the largest block of land owned by the School is south of Old Farms Road and south of the proposed relocated roadway, the School's land holdings extend from the Farmington Town line almost to Country Club Road. Overall, these land holdings total more than 800 acres.**

For land which may be excess to the School's future educational and related needs, the land use study looked at two development scenarios; one following R40 guidelines and the second following RU2A guidelines. Should the School need-wish to sell some or all of its property in the future for development, it is the Town's position that a compact clustered development pattern would result in a more desirable outcome than a conventional large-lot subdivision. Division of this property into conventional single-family house lots would result only in the preservation of 10% of the property as open space. Development in a more compact fashion would result in preserving much more of this property as permanently protected open space (perhaps as much as 50%) with an overall impact that would be comparable to or less than that of a conventional single-family subdivision. Commercial or office development is not appropriate.

A portion of the Old Farms School property (generally north of Thompson Road) is shown on the Water Pollution Control Authority's Master Sewer Facilities Plan as being eligible for future sewer. Opportunities exist to expand the sewer service area for a substantial portion of additional areas located south of Old Farms Road, as well. Recent revisions to the State Plan of Conservation and Development include language to make it possible for the State to conclude that sewer service to this area is consistent with State goals, where development will occur in a compact manner, resulting in the preservation of more open space than would result in comparison to a conventional single-family subdivision served with onsite septic systems. Expansion of the sewer service area should be pursued in order to minimize the amount of area used for development and maximize the amount of area which could be preserved as undeveloped land or open space.

To accommodate a compact clustered development pattern, the Commission should amend the EL (educational land) zoning regulations to allow, by special permit, compact residential developments. These developments can take the form of single-family homes on individual lots or on land owned in fee or in common; rental apartments; housing for the elderly; assisted living facilities; or other housing types which the Commission may deem appropriate. A formula should be established within the Regulations defining "equivalency factors"; this formula should compare the impact of one single-family home to other housing types. Variables to consider might include traffic generation, building mass, and lot coverage. Using this methodology, a proposed project may be compared to a single-family subdivision developed at a density of .6 to .8 units per acre. The School should, at a minimum, always retain ownership of enough land area in the vicinity of the School's campus to comply with a ratio of 35% lot coverage to 65% green space (standard for institutional uses).

A substantial corridor of open space should be preserved connecting the Farmington Valley Greenway with the Fisher Farm and Fisher Meadows, town-owned properties. In addition, building orientations should be such that a wooded streetscape is preserved along Old Farms Road, Scoville Road, and/or Thompson Road to the extent feasible. The use of a compact clustered development pattern will help make this happen. Such a layout will also benefit Avon Old Farms School by preserving a more rural landscape in the vicinity of the existing campus structures plus any expansion of the campus to the south.