

Stow Planning Board | March 2021

# **RECONSIDERING THE ACTIVE ADULT NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAY DISTRICT**

# Public Forum Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Stow's Active Adult Neighborhoods (AAN)
3. Current Development Potential in AAN
4. Senior Housing Trends in Stow
5. Open Space Considerations
6. Goals for Zoning Bylaw Update

# Presenters



Lori Clark | Stow Planning Board Chair



Jesse Steadman | Town Planner



Malcolm Ragan | Assistant Planner/GIS  
Administrator

# Summary



Planning Board is considering changes to the Active Adult Neighborhood Zoning Overlay District and holding Forum to gain feedback;



Presentation will provide context of Board's coordination with Habitech, Inc. to better understand development scenarios and how Zoning changes could improve those outcomes.

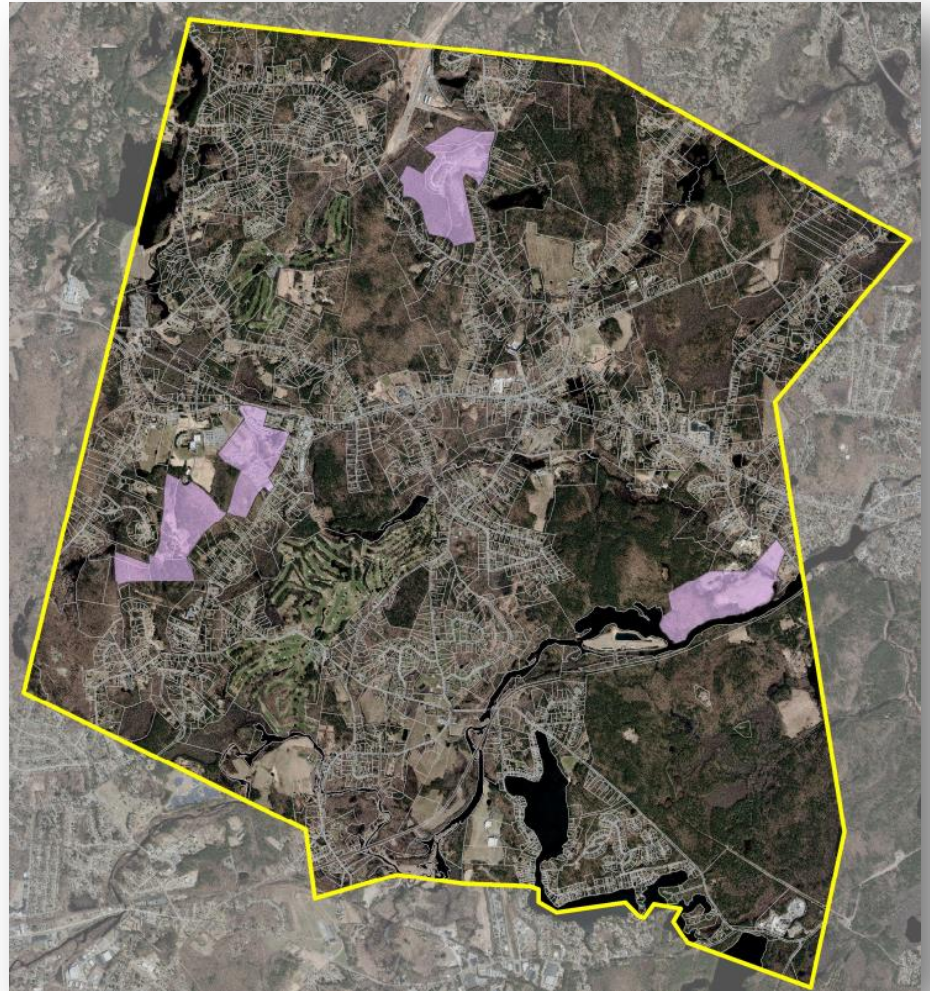


Next steps will be to work on Zoning Bylaw language and hold a Public Hearing on the changes prior to Town Meeting.

# Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District

- Creates opportunity for housing restricted to adults 55+ on certain parcels in Industrial and Commercial District;
- Called an “Overlay District” because underlying zoning uses can still be pursued.
- Requires 10% of homes to be affordable
- Includes set aside of Open Land for conservation/Recreation

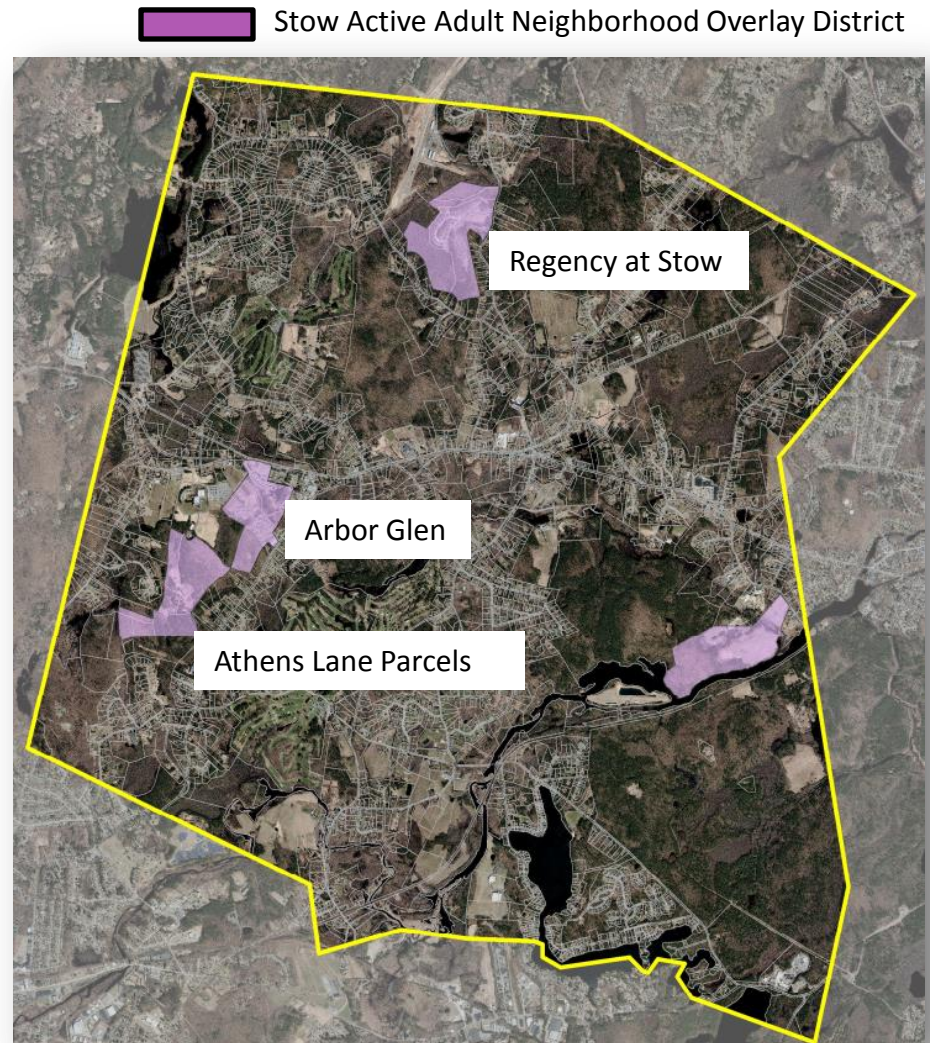
 Stow Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District





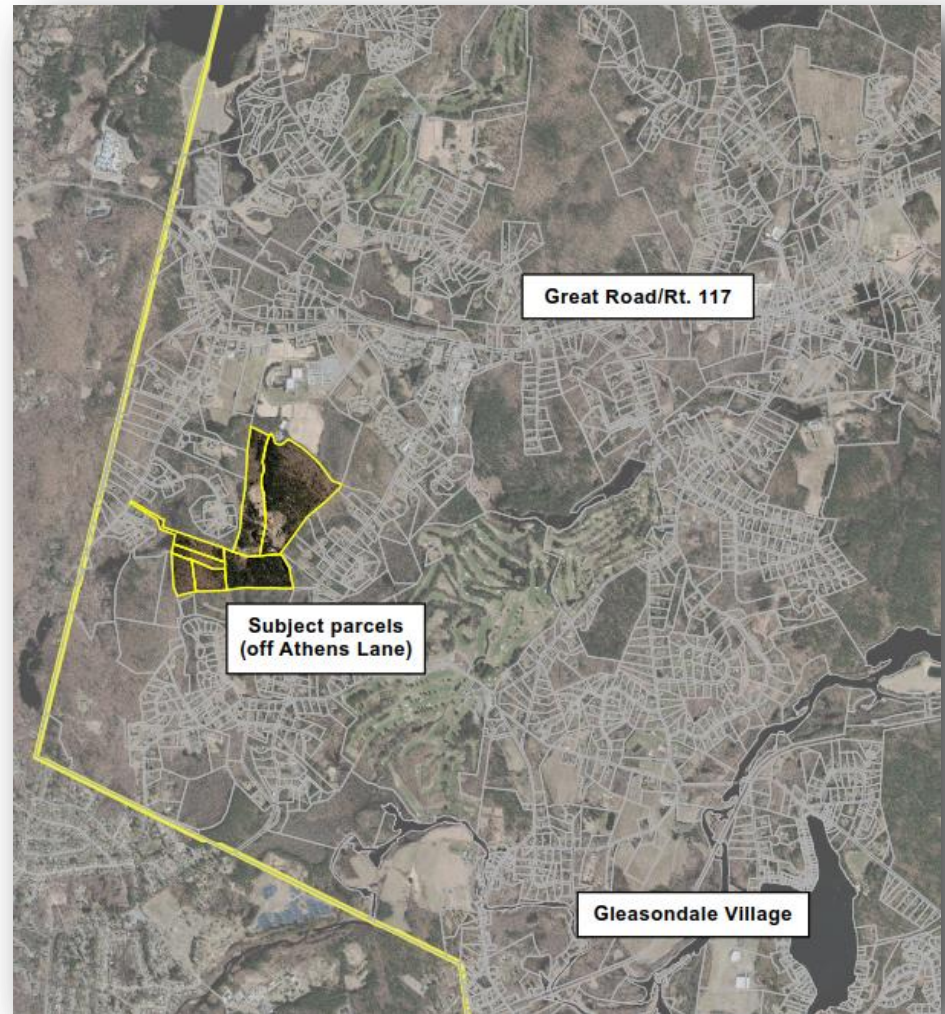
# Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District

- Established in 2002
- Includes 14 Parcels, in Industrial and Commercial zones;
- 2 Neighborhoods Developed - totaling 132 Homes
  - *Arbor Glen*  
Hudson Road
  - *Regency at Stow*  
Boxboro Road
- Zoning Bylaw limits the number of AAN units allowed in Stow



# Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District | Athens Lane Parcels

- 114 Acres off Athens Lane
- Largest contiguous area of parcels remaining in Overlay District
- Underlying Zoning - Industrial
- Accessed via Athens Lane off Hudson Road



# Guiding Questions



What is the range of current potential development outcomes on the parcels Habitech, Inc. has an interest in?



What are the financial and land use impacts of certain development outcomes?



What is the current demand for older-adult housing and how have Stow's demographics changed since the original passage of the Active Adult Neighborhood Zoning in 2002?



How can bylaw updates target current and anticipated needs?



# Athens Lane

## *Current Development Potential*

**Prohibiting redevelopment at Athens Lane is not a feasible option.**

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# Athens Lane

## *Current Development Potential*

### **Prohibiting redevelopment at Athens Lane is not a feasible option.**

1. Underlying zoning allows for certain uses regardless of amending AAN Overlay District;
2. Parcels are not in the Chapter 61 program, and therefore the Town does not have right of first refusal;
3. Comprehensive Permits via Chapter 40B are able to create housing that is beyond the reach of the Town's zoning.

# Athens Lane

## *Current Development Potential*

**By Right Development – Research/Office/Manufacturing**





# Athens Lane

## *Current Development Potential*

### **By Right Development – Screened Storage**





# Athens Lane

## *Current Development Potential*

**Comprehensive Permit (via Chapter 40B) | 250+ Housing Units**



# Benefits of Zoning Update

**With site under control of a motivated development firm, updating the AAN Overlay District zoning offers an opportunity to:**

- 1. Improve upon the original vision** of the Active Adult Neighborhood without changing the zoning district boundaries;
- 2. Complement conservation goals** by pursuing more compatible uses than industrial uses;
- 3. Shape and influence development outcomes** in a way that meets Stows planning goals.

# Regional Older Adult Housing Needs

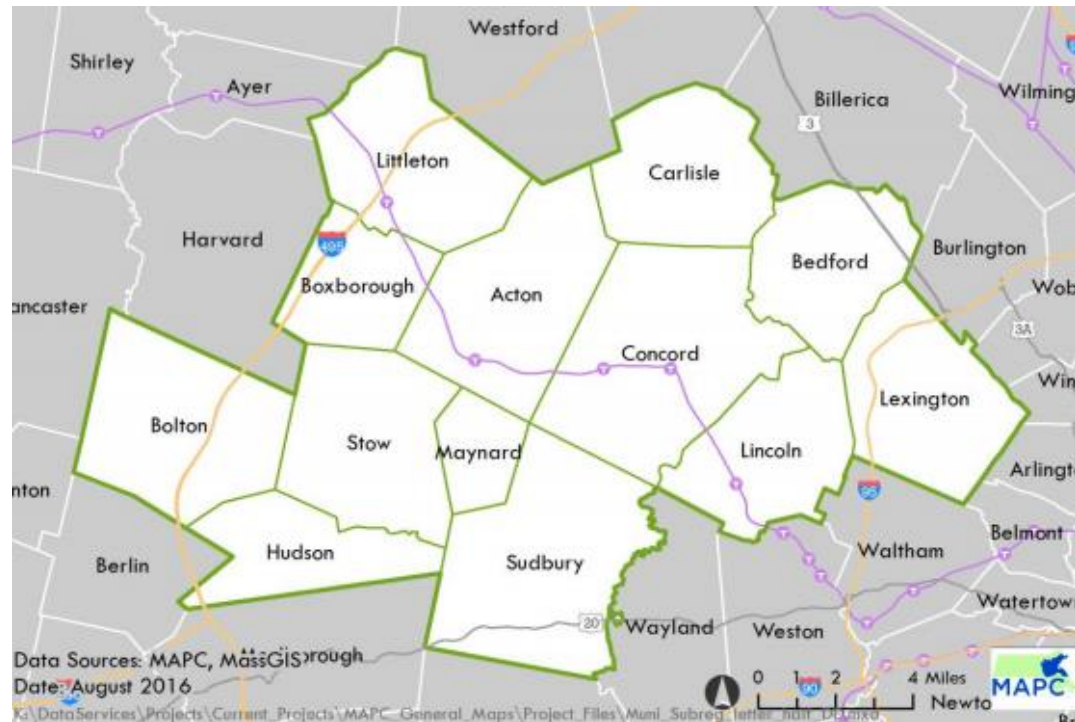
**Housing Affordability** and  
Financial Assistance for Cost  
Burdened Households;

**Diverse Housing Options** to  
support downsizing,  
incentivize natural  
affordability, provide access to  
community resources;

**Home Accessibility  
Modifications and  
Maintenance**

**Housing Integrated with  
Services** to support health and  
wellbeing.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council MAGIC Subregion



# Trends Among Older Adults in Stow

2016 Stow Housing Production Plan (HPP) Survey Data

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Rising Demand for Smaller Units</b>         | <b>Stow's Population is Aging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ~30% of population estimated to be over 65 by 2030</li></ul>   |
|  | <b>Increasing Home Size – Smaller Households</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Over 67% of respondents are living in a three bedroom or larger home</li><li>- 2000 – 2010 Average household size fell by -3.9% to 2.71 persons</li></ul>   |
|  | <b>Interest in Downsizing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 23.9% of respondents anticipated downsizing by 2021.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Housing Challenges Due to Fixed Incomes</b> | <b>Diversity of Housing Types Needed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Older adults will be increasingly stuck between low fixed incomes and relatively high assets from previous homes sales that prohibit them from qualifying “affordable” homes, but force them toward market rate options they cannot afford.</li></ul> |

# Stow's Housing Cost Burden\*

## *& the Missing Middle*

*Cost Burden Incidence by Household Income Group in Stow*

| Household Type by Income Group                | Extremely Low | Very Low | Low | Middle | High  | Total |
|---|---------------|----------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
| # of households in income group               | 75            | 215      | 160 | 220    | 1,660 | 2,330 |
| # of cost burdened households                 | 60            | 160      | 85  | 140    | 155   | 600   |
| % of cost burdened households in income group | 80%           | 74%      | 53% | 62%    | 10%   | 26%   |

*\*A household is “cost burdened” when over 1/3 of all income is spent on housing.*



# Stow's Housing Cost Burden & the Missing Middle

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# Expectations

## *2002 Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District Zoning*

- Provide housing for residents looking to downsize;
- Promote a diverse range of affordability, including housing for low and moderate incomes;
- Reduce maintenance obligations of homeownership.

### *Sources:*

*CHAPA: Age Restricted Adult Housing in Massachusetts, June 2005, Last Updated 2008.*

*Streamline Communities: Market Analysis for Habitech, Inc., 2019*

*Stow Planning Department*

# Results

## *2002 Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District Zoning*

- Housing created has largely benefited “young, healthy, financially secure seniors;”
- Average 2018 sale price for 55+ home in Stow = \$670,202;
- Diversity in home construction has been reduced through buy-out provisions in zoning bylaw.

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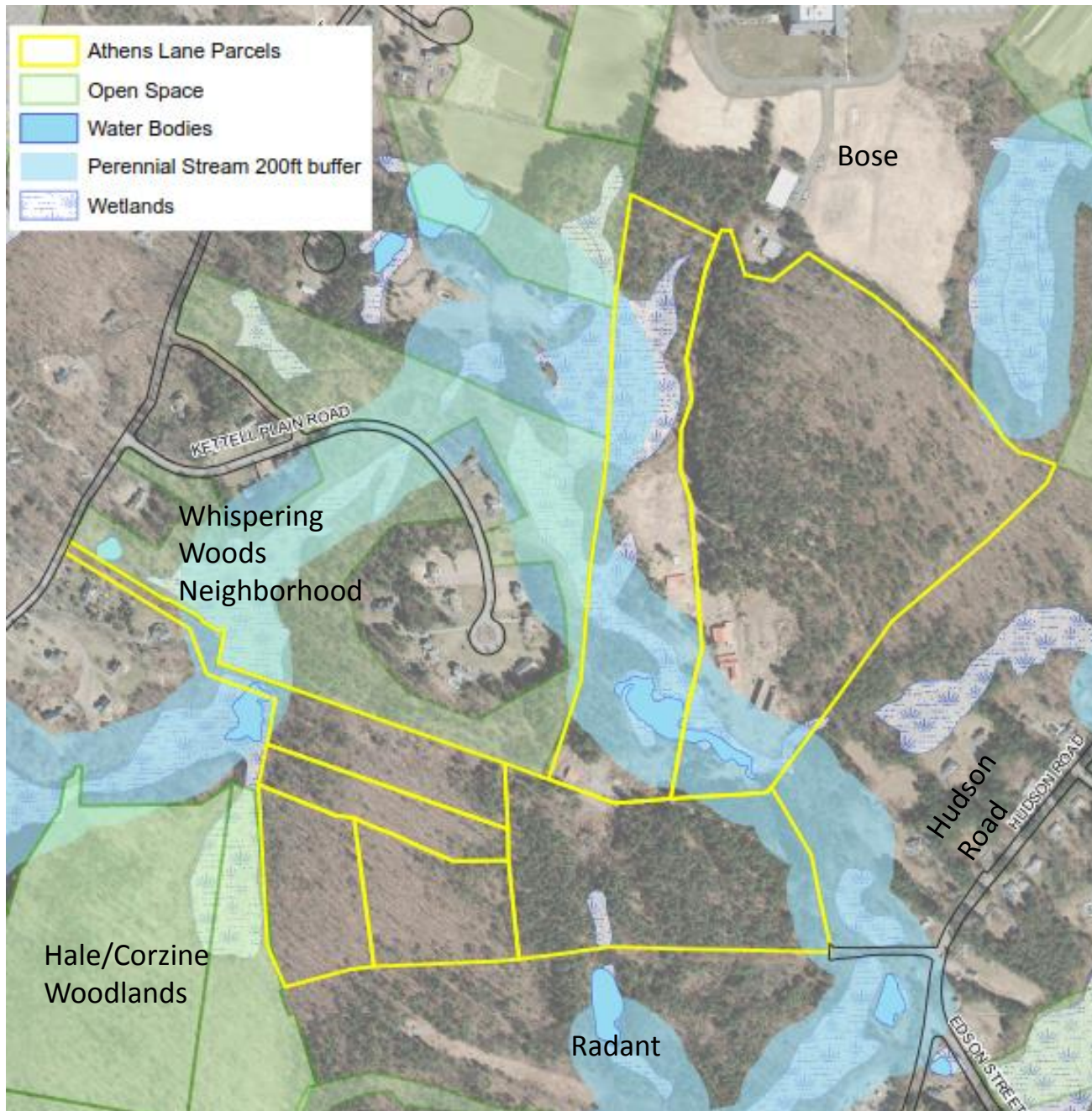


# Open Space Considerations

*Photo Credit: Kathy Sferra*

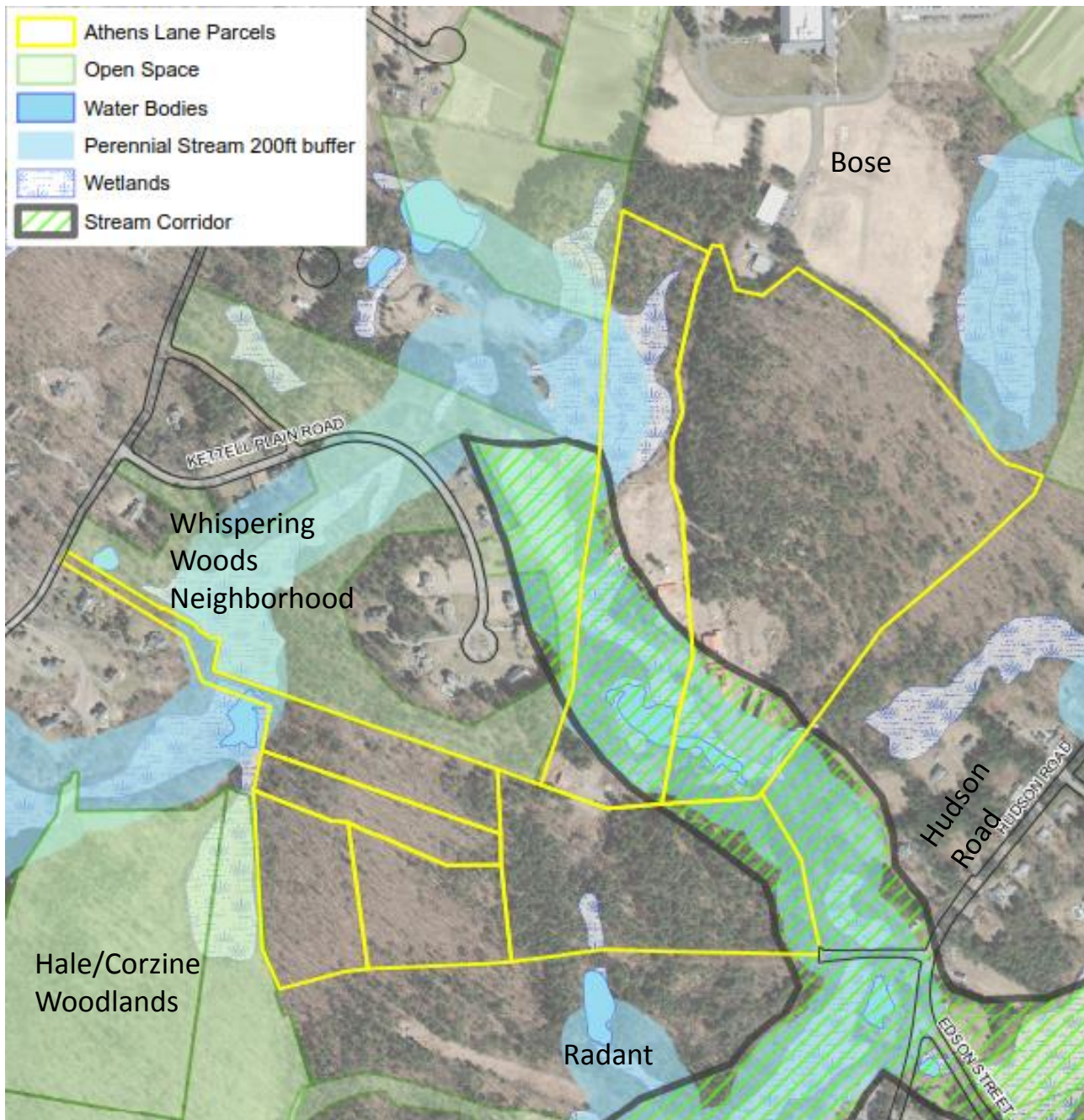






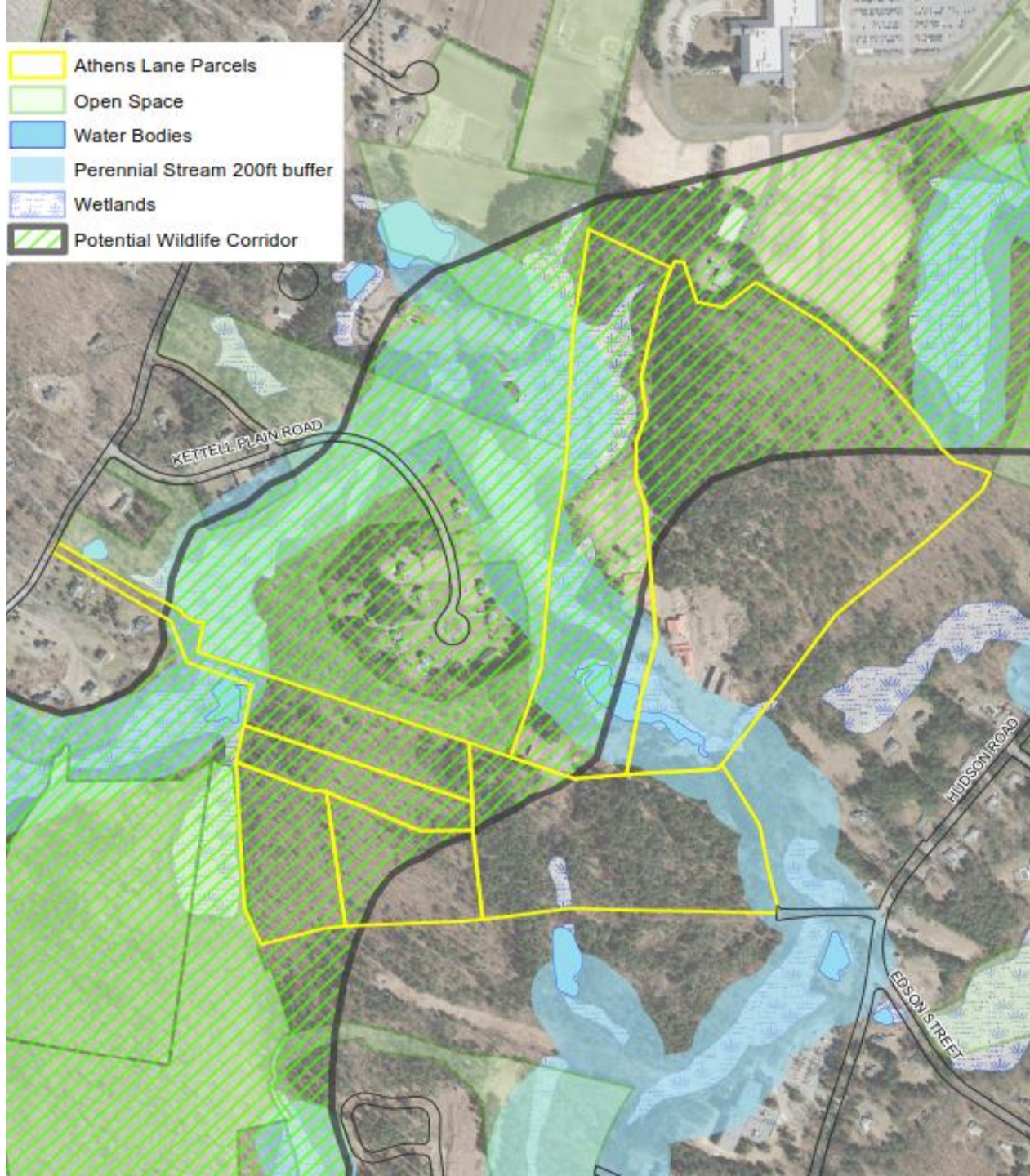
*Data Source:  
Stow Planning  
Department  
and Assessor  
Maps*





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- Athens Lane Parcels
- Potential Wildlife Corridor

# 2020 Comprehensive Permit Concept

(not currently proposed)



Data Source:  
Stow Planning  
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and Assessor  
Maps



# Open Space Planning

**Increase Amount of Land for Preservation** by creating neighborhood clusters;

**Link Protected Open Spaces** by identifying priority corridors prior to housing envelope;

**Provide Trail Linkages** for community connections for residents and abutters;

**Create Open Space Opportunities** in “underserved quadrant”



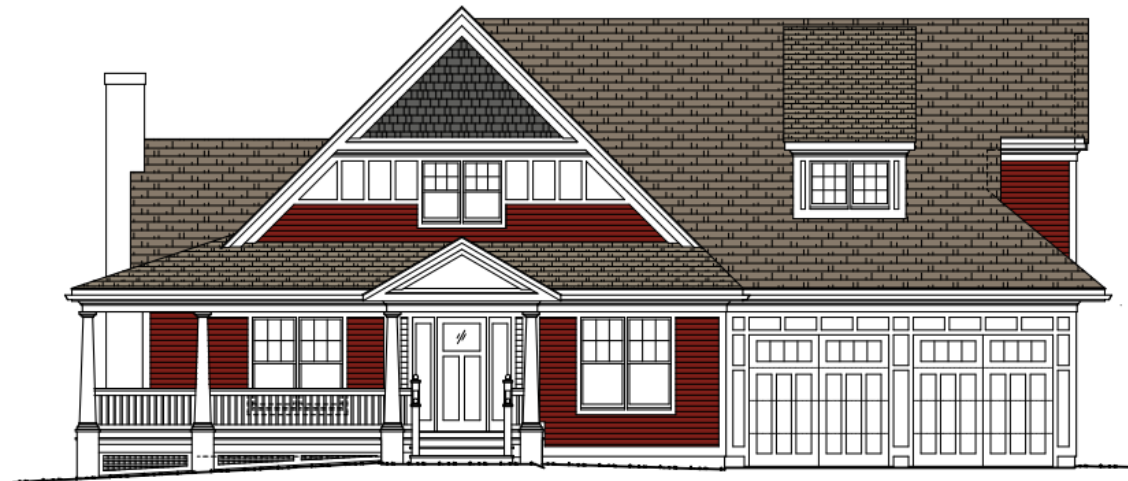
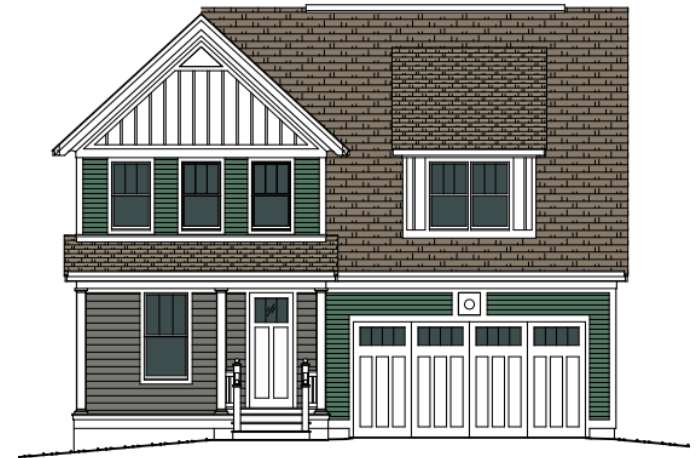
*Photo Credit: Kathy Sferra*

# Guiding Principles for Bylaw Update

## *Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District*

### Require Diversity of Housing

- Variations in the number of bedrooms
- Different home sizes and designs
- Mix of attached and detached units
- Blend of naturally affordable and income restricted homes





# Guiding Principles for Bylaw Update

## *Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District*

### **Produce “Age-Targeted” homes and communities**

- Design for residents to age in place within diversified, communal neighborhood;
- Include universal access designs, e.g., first floor master bedrooms, accessible entrances and layouts;
- Create accessible, connected neighborhoods



# Guiding Principles for Bylaw Update

## *Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District*

### **Generate Functional Community Spaces and Opportunities**

- Community kitchens, gardens, parks and civic spaces;
- Pedestrian scaled design features and sidewalks;
- Accessible trails and trail linkages;
- Homes that orient to one another or to communal spaces.



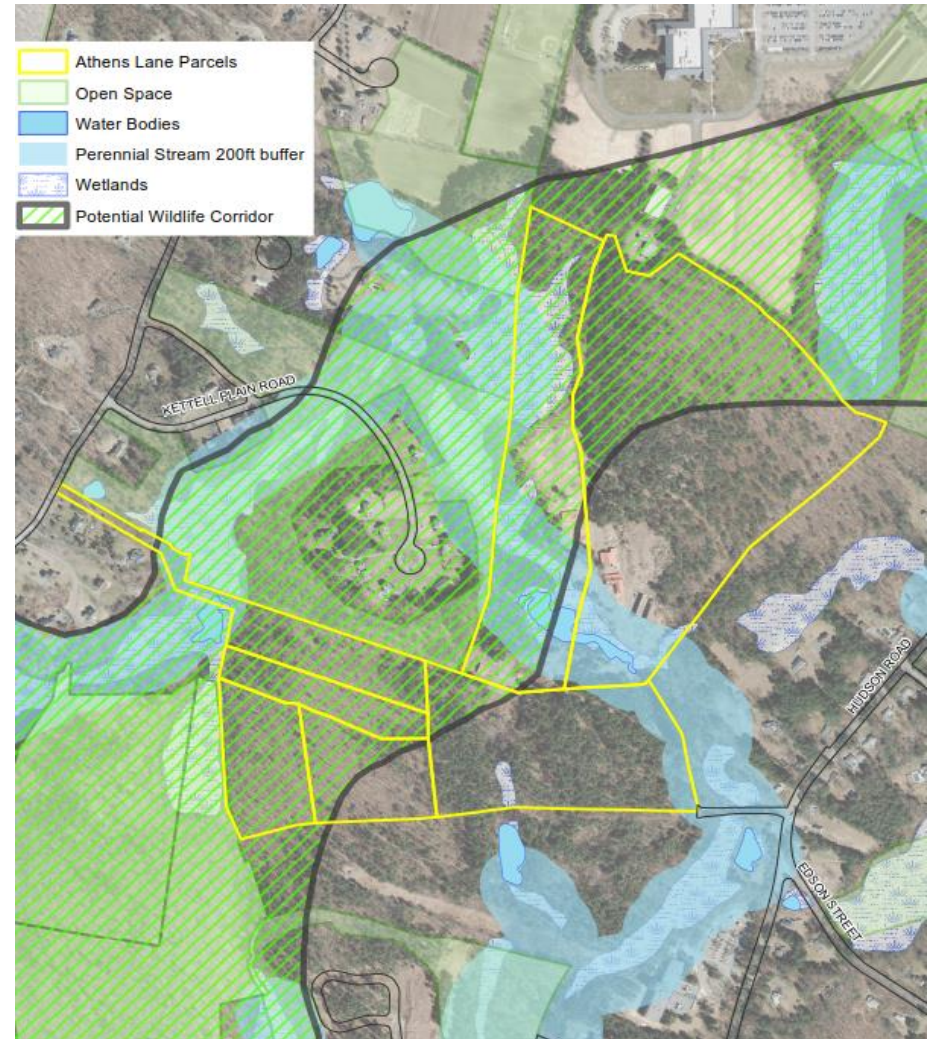


# Guiding Principles for Bylaw Update

## *Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District*

### Improve Open Space Planning

- Adopt provisions from Planned Conservation Development bylaw to incentivize conservation oriented design;
- Raise the percentage of open space provided for the ability to cluster homes;
- Promote connections to existing and abutting open space areas to create habitat and recreation corridors.



# Zoning Amendment Goals

## **Require Diversity of Housing**

Variations in bedrooms, mix of Home size, design and affordability;

**Produce “Age-Targeted” Homes and Communities** to allow residents to age in place within a diverse community;

## **Improve Open Space Planning**

by adopting proven standards from other Town bylaws and incentivizing connections and corridors of recreation and conservation;

## **Generate Functional Communal Spaces**

Through inclusion of community kitchens, gardens, function spaces and pedestrian opportunities.





# Next Steps



Review Public Forum comments and draft Zoning Bylaw language to reflect planning goals;



Work with Town Departments to understand service impacts of various development scenarios, including traffic and emergency access.



Hold Public Hearing in April, prior to Annual Town Meeting