




LOCAL
IMPLEMENTATION

Implemented on Cape Cod

OVERVIEW

Adaptive reuse involves retrofitting existing buildings for new purposes such as changing an old school to new housing. These projects utilize previously developed or disturbed land and may stimulate or enhance underused and existing centers of activity. Reusing existing buildings can minimize environmental impacts by not disturbing vacant land, reduce the need for carbon-emissions-intensive new building materials, and may provide savings or efficiencies if able to reuse existing infrastructure. Adaptive reuse for housing in predominantly commercial areas can be one way of creating more mixed-use centers, bringing residents and a built-in customer base to businesses in the area. Additionally, adaptive reuse can be a critical tool in preserving historic buildings while responding to current needs. Assistance for adaptive reuse may be in the form of grants, reduced property sales prices, technical assistance for design or site preparation, or streamlined permitting or regulations for projects that are reusing existing buildings.

CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

-  Not Allowed to Build Multi-family Housing
-  Too Expensive to Build New Housing
-  Too Expensive to Secure or Maintain Housing
-  Hard to Find Year-round Housing

POTENTIAL BENEFITS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Reuse can provide an opportunity for building preservation
- Encourages more sustainable development by repurposing structures and building where infrastructure may already exist
- May provide opportunities for more mixed-use development including among residential, commercial, and cultural spaces
- Regulations and zoning may not allow for adaptation
- Some buildings may have structural constraints or may need significant resources to be updated to meet certain standards

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

MassHousing Commercial Conversion Initiative -

This program from MassHousing provides towns with planning technical assistance to promote the redevelopment of opportune underutilized commercial buildings as housing, activating downtown neighborhoods.

Cape Cod Seasonal Worker Dormitory Model Bylaw

- This model bylaw provides parameters for allowing seasonal worker dormitories, including specifically for redevelopment of existing structures.

CASE STUDY: SIMPKINS SCHOOL APARTMENTS, YARMOUTH, MA (2014)

This project turned Yarmouth's former John Simpkins School into 58 affordable housing units (studio, one-, and two-bedroom apartments) for people 55 years and older. The redevelopment preserved many of the historic characteristics of the building and is located in one of the village centers of town. The project received funding support from the former Department of Housing and Community Development and the property was purchased from the town for about \$500,000.

