



Concord Housing Development Corporation

Assabet River Homes – Project Narrative

Background:

The CHDC acquired the Assabet River Bluff property in August 2022 as part of a joint Housing and Open Space purchase.

This property was identified in the Concord Open Space and Recreation Plan and the River Stewardship Councils' Wild & Scenic Prioritization Plan as a priority parcel for protection, and when out on the open market, presented a unique opportunity to create five new affordable housing units while preserving the open space area.

The 2022 Concord Annual Town Meeting overwhelmingly supported the \$2.9 million Assabet River Bluff 7-acre property purchase for both open space and affordable housing purposes. The housing portion (1 acre, \$1million) was purchased with CPA funds and funds from the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (CMAHT).

Through extensive community conversations, Assabet River Homes, situated on the one-acre housing portion of the site, was conceived and restricted to house 5 units of low income, SHI-eligible housing: two in the existing duplex and three to be constructed. The existing duplex, with its two 1 Bedroom apartments was to be renovated and then restricted as permanently affordable, and three new affordable units constructed following a competitive request for proposal process., after the permitting.

The Assabet River Homes requirements are memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a CPA Grant Agreement, and a mortgage on the property, which releases with each of the five affordable housing restrictions recorded. These framework documents structure the project to be built.

Once the property was purchased, the plan for the housing design and creation began.

Progress to Date:

In the year since the property was acquired, the CHDC has focused on the following fronts.

1. **Maintain the existing property:** The CHDC owns the two apartments at 406 Old Marlboro Road, of which one is leased. The CHDC is under contract with the Concord Housing Authority for maintenance support. The CHDC performs other landlord duties as required: utilities, taxes, insurance, and supporting the existing tenant with requests as necessary.
2. **Renovate 406 Old Marlboro Road:** The CHDC is committed to fully renovating the units before including them in the Town's affordable housing inventory. The building was constructed in 1896 and is 126 years old. The original building has been expanded and all aspects have been maintained well throughout the years. The dwelling is three floors, with apartment 406A on the second floor, accessed through the front door. The second apartment (406B) is on the ground floor and is accessed through a side door. Access to the basement is in apartment 406B. There are two curb cuts presently, one in closer proximity to each unit.

The CHDC commissioned a home inspection prior to purchase and has completed all the noted defects, as well as additional capital improvements:

- Replace entire carpet in 406A
- Replace the roof over the entire structure



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- Replace the HVAC system with electric heat pumps and mini-split systems. Additionally replace the hot water heaters (leaving them connected to the gas service due to electric service constraints). Remove all ductwork.
3. **Design Assabet River Homes:** The CHDC, through its public and open meetings, has progressed the design of the Assabet River Homes in the site plan, the landscape plan, and the concept architectural. These plans are the basis for the Planned Residential Development (PRD) application.

Current Proposal:

Development of the Assabet River Bluff directly aligns with the 2022 approved and adopted Housing Production Plan as **Strategy #1** (*The CHDC creates SHI units at Assabet River Bluff, supported by the CPC, CMAHT, and Concord Housing Foundation*), and **Strategy #9** (*Identify strategies to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the town's housing planning, policies, and zoning bylaws, such as promoting 3- and more-bedroom homes for families or group homes for people with disabilities.*)

The current proposal is to create a 5-unit condominium, with 12 bedrooms in total: two 1BR apartments, two 3BR condominium homes and one 4BR condominium home.

The plan is to convey the two 1BR apartments to the Concord Housing Authority, who will lease the units to low income tenants under their Project-Based Voucher Program (PBV), as well as managing and maintaining the condominium and its accounts. Concord has a number of small condominium developments that are 100% affordable, and through that experience, recognizes that it is helpful to have experienced property management involved in the condominium management.

The condominium will have a private driveway access off Old Marlboro Road, replacing the existing two curb cuts, to service all 5-units.

The driveway parallels the property line before curving with the property boundary, with a new septic system and field for the 406 Old Marlboro Road units outside the driveway path. The plan includes a fence down the property line with 416 Old Marlboro Road. There is space around the curve for snow storage.

The three new construction homes are sited off the driveway, taking advantage of the natural setting with paths and proximity to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The homes are designed as two 3Bedroom and one 4Bedroom, in alignment with the need for family housing as outlined in the Housing Production Plan. Each home has its own septic system, uncovered parking area.

The landscaping plan is modest, with one ornamental tree and 4-5 foundation plantings for each unit. The back part of the site is only 80' wide, and as such, will be cleared completely to accommodate the driveway (with room for snow spill-over) and the homes. The existing trails to the conservation land will be blocked to discourage public access through the site. The existing stone wall, in its current state of disrepair, will be retained.

The homes are designed to blend into the neighboring styles with variations between them. Each home has a porch/portico, study/mud room as well as bed, kitchen, dining, common area:

- Building 1 – Labeled as Unit C on the civil plan, is 3Bedroom, 2.5 bath 2079 Sq Ft
- Building 2 – Labeled as Unit D on the civil plan, is 3Bedroom, 2.5 bath, 1980 Sq Ft
- Building 3 – Labeled as Unit E on the civil plan, is 4Bedroom, 2.5 bath, 2124 Sq Ft.



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The plan in total is well-conceived and achieves the project goals of creating five units of low income housing, of diverse styles, sizes and tenure, providing both rental and family homeownership.

PRD Criteria:

Specifically, regarding the PRD criteria, and the requirements set out in zoning bylaws Section 10.0, 11.6 and 11.8, the application proposes the following.

Section 10.0

10.1 Purpose: The PRD allows by special permit from the Board an alternative pattern of residential land development. *Per the Special Provisions of Section 10.3.2 for a Non-profit entity, many of the limitations contained with Section 10.2 shall not apply to this PRD application submitted by the CHDC in which a minimum of (75%) of the dwelling units will be of a combination of low-income dwelling units and affordable dwelling units, provided that the Board shall find that the proposed design is generally in keeping with the purposes of this Bylaw.*

10.2 Standards:

10.2.1 Minimum Tract Size: 43,560 square feet provided; *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, the (80,000) square feet minimum in Residence B shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.2.2 Maximum Permissible Density: Five (5) dwelling units are proposed. *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, the Maximum permissible density within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.2.3 Diversity of Dwelling Units: A mix of diverse housing opportunities shall be provided. *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, this requirement within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.2.4 Permitted Uses: Single-family detached and two-family dwellings are allowed. *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, the Permitted Uses within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.2.5 Lot Area, Frontage and Yard Requirements: The CHDC Buildings are proposed approximately 10-feet from the boundary line of the PRD as opposed to the typical requirement of twenty-feet. *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, the Lot Area, Frontage and Yard Requirements within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.2.6 Access to the Tract: *Access to the Tract will be provided from an existing public way through the existing frontage along Old Marlboro Road.*

10.2.7 Height: *Each structure will be constructed below the maximum permitted height within a PRD of thirty-five (35) feet.*

10.2.8 Area of Residential Development: *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, Area of Residential Development criteria within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.2.9 Common Open Space: *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, the Common Open Space criteria within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*



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10.2.10 Limitation of Subdivision: *Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, this limitation within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.2.11 Sustainable Design Requirement: *The use of natural drainage flow paths and incorporation of bioretention features/rain gardens have been proposed. However, Per Special Provisions for a Non-Profit Entity, this Requirement within this PRD tract shall not apply to this PRD application.*

10.3.2 Special Provisions for Non-profit entity: *Except as provided for in subsection 10.2.6 and 10.2.7 above, the limitations contained in subsection 10.2 shall not apply to a PRD application submitted by a Non-profit entity in which seventy-five percent (75%) of the units will be of the type described in subsection 10.2.3.1 and 10.2.3.2 provided that the Board shall find that the proposed design is generally in keeping with the purposes of this Bylaw.* The CHDC is a private Non-Profit Entity, in which 100-percent of the units will be of the type described, within a Parcel reserved for affordable housing.

Section 11.6

11.6.1 Impacts on economic or community needs: The proposal creates 5 new units of permanently deed restricted units of affordable housing, a number sufficient to bring Concord across the 10% threshold.

11.6.2 Traffic flow and safety concerns, including parking and loading: *The proposal improves the traffic flow and sightline that currently exists by moving the driveway access and curb cut further away from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.*

11.6.3 Adequacy of utilities and other public services: *There are adequate utilities and public services to service the three new homes.*

11.6.4 Impacts on neighborhood character: *The new construction homes are designed to blend with the neighbor character and are sited to fit the topography and physical aspects of the site.*

11.6.5 Impacts on the natural environment: *The housing proposal enabled the Town to acquire the adjoining 6-acres for open space. Without the housing portion, the open space protection would not have been possible.*

11.6.6 Fiscal impacts, including impacts on town services, the tax base and employment. *The homes are within walking distance to shops, commuter rail and other services, as well as the rail trail for non-car access.*

Section 11.8

11.8.5 Site Plan Review: In reviewing the site plan submittal, the following matters shall be considered:

- a) Protection of adjoining premises against seriously detrimental uses by provision for surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers, and preservation of views, light and air: *The proposal includes a fence between the adjoining residential property, and catch basins for the surface water drainage.*
- b) Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site, the location of driveway openings in relation to traffic or to adjacent streets and, when necessary, compliance with other regulations for the handicapped, minors and the elderly: *The access within the site is designed for the three homes planned. The way is private and low traffic volume anticipated.*
- c) Adequacy of the methods of disposal of refuse and other wastes resulting from the uses permitted on the site: *The homes will be serviced by on-site new septic systems in full compliance with all requirements.*



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- d) Adequacy of the arrangement of parking and loading spaces in relation to the proposed uses of the premises: *Each home has parking for two cars, and there is provisions for visitor parking.*
- e) Adequacy of the method of exterior lighting for convenience, safety and security within the site and for protection of neighboring properties, roadways and the night sky: *There are no exterior lights.*
- f) Relationship of structures and open spaces to the natural landscape, existing buildings and other community assets in the area and compliance with other requirements of this Bylaw: *The proposal sites the new structures with ample space between them, in conformance to surrounding residential properties. Once built, the new homes will easily blend into the neighborhood.*
- g) Impact on the Town's resources including the effect of the Town's water supply and distribution system, sewage collection and treatment, fire protection, and streets: *The way is private and sized to enable fire trucks to turn around, the sewage collection is private septic, and there is negligible impact to other town services and water supply.*
- h) Incorporation of sustainability and resiliency principles into the site design that result in a plan that is responsive to the environment and actively contributes to the development of a more sustainable community: *The new construction homes will be fossil-fuel free, and the existing two-units have been converted to heat pumps already.*



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Timeline:

PHASE	Timeline
1. Acquire Property	August 2022
2. Design Assabet River Homes	2023
3. Obtain PRD zoning permit	2023
4. Create Condominium	2023
5. Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)	2023
6. Complete renovations	2023
7. Convey 406A and 406B to Concord Housing Authority	2024
8. Record two units (406A, 406B) on the SHI	2024
9. Start Site Work	2024
10. Award RFP, including development services agreement	2024
11. Obtain funding through CMAHT	2024
12. Convey property to developer	2024
13. Construct units	2025
14. Regulate under LIP Program	2024/2025
15. Sell condominium units	2026
16. Record three units on the SHI	2026