



community development partnership

# 95 Lawrence Road, Wellfleet FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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*Note: This is intended to be a living document and will be reviewed and updated as necessary*

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## What is the developer proposing to build?

Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc. (POAH), a national nonprofit developer of affordable housing and the Community Development Partnership (CDP), the Eastham-based nonprofit community development corporation, have proposed to build and manage an affordable rental community at 95 Lawrence Road. This community will include forty-six rental units on a six-acre site. Most of the units will be income-restricted at income levels ranging from 30% to 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) and will serve the housing needs of families and seniors from Wellfleet and the surrounding communities.

The “Upper Village” will feature 22 townhouses and 2 flats in seven buildings, and the “Lower Village” will consist of one three-story building with 24 one- and two-bedroom flats. This property will include a community building, maintenance building, as well as several outdoor recreation areas. The development will have a total of 60 parking spaces for residents and guests (1.30 parking spaces per home). Additionally, the Lower “Village” building will have an elevator, providing accessibility for elderly or handicapped residents.

The plans listed below are for one, two and three-bedroom flats and townhouses, including two units that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- One Bedroom Flats – 16 units
- Two Bedroom Flats – 6 units
- Two Bedroom ADA Flat – 1 unit
- Three Bedroom ADA Flat – 1 unit
- Two Bedroom Townhouses – 18 units
- Three Bedroom Townhouses – 4 units

Twenty-four percent of the homes (around 11 total units) will be rented at market rate, serving residents whose household incomes are greater than 60% of AMI, but who are still unable to find affordable, decent year-round housing in Wellfleet or elsewhere on the Outer Cape.

The development will have site-based staff including a property manager, a maintenance superintendent, and a Community Impact resident services coordinator.

## Does Wellfleet really need this many affordable homes?

Wellfleet has one of the lowest percentages of affordable housing on Cape Cod. The [Town's Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan](#) suggests that housing with deeper affordability, or at rents that are affordable to households earning 60% of AMI or less, is needed in order to address the reality that too many of Wellfleet's residents are rent-burdened, spending in excess of 35% of their incomes on rent. Based on the 2015 census estimate, 73% of year-round Wellfleet renters are rent-burdened.

For further reference, in 2020 at the recently constructed Village at Nauset Green in Eastham, nearly half of the 290 applicants were at the lowest income level. With only 65 units available in this mixed-income development, the sheer number of applicants emphasized the desperate need for deeper affordability for residents at the lowest income level. Eleven of those units, or 17%, were designated for residents making 30% or less of the AMI for Barnstable County. Close to half of the total - 132 applicants - were in the 30% or less group.

Agencies providing affordable rental housing on the Outer Cape report long waiting lists for available homes. Furthermore, employers and small businesses on the Outer Cape report significant challenges in hiring due to the lack of affordable housing. For individuals and families, the lack of affordable rental homes undermines the ability of young families and seniors to live on the Outer Cape. The creation of new affordable rental homes will help meet this demand for our economy and year-round community.

## Who is eligible to rent the affordable apartments?

The apartments in this development will be available for individuals and families with a variety of incomes. Three quarters of the units will be available to those earning less than 60% of AMI, with 17% of those units targeted to deeper affordability levels of 30% of AMI. Those deeply affordable homes will be subsidized by project-based Section 8 vouchers (PBV) secured for this property to help those most in need. Residents in these units will only pay 30% of their household income for rent.

Area Median Income (AMI) for Barnstable County 2021				Total Number of Units Proposed	
Household Size	1 person		2 people		
30% AMI	\$20,430/year   \$393/week		\$23,325/year   \$449/week		8 units (30% - 50% AMI)
50% AMI	\$34,050/year   \$655/week		\$38,875/year   \$748/week		27 units (50% - 60% AMI)
60% AMI	\$40,860/year   \$786/week		\$46,650/year   \$897/week		11 units (60% - 80% AMI)

## Will there be a preference for people who live or work in Wellfleet?

For prospective residents, a lottery will take place, and the Town will request permission from the State to give preference to those who live or work in Wellfleet as well as the Outer Cape communities (including households with children attending school in Wellfleet).

For example, as part of the recent Village at Nauset Green development, Eastham residents, employees, and parents of children in Eastham schools received preference for 65 percent of the units; another 10 percent of the units gave preference to any Barnstable County resident. The remaining 25 percent of the units at the housing development were open to all applicants.

## Will this provide a place for seniors in our town to live?

Yes, this development has been designed to accommodate both seniors and families. The building in the “Lower Village” will have an elevator, making the building easily accessible for senior residents. In addition, all apartments will be accessible by individuals with physical disabilities and two units will be fully ADA compliant.

We will discuss this further in the next question, but many seniors living on the Outer Cape do so in single family homes, often surrounded by homes that are empty in the winter. The ability to live in a thriving community surrounded by year-round neighbors provides support for the sense of isolation that many seniors feel. A community room in the “Lower Village” building offers a great opportunity for all the neighbors to gather and build stronger relationships among year-round residents.

## Couldn't Wellfleet's affordable housing needs be better met by building small, scattered site developments?

Small, scattered site developments are not economically viable – they are much more expensive to build and even more expensive to maintain. For reference, the Community Development Partnership (CDP) owns and manages two small-scale rental developments in Eastham. One of these developments is five units and the other two units. In 2014, the Town of Eastham provided the CDP with over \$200,000 in Community Preservation Funds to finance significant repairs to the units. The CDP had to raise an additional \$200,000 from private sources to complete the necessary repairs. The expense of managing small scale rental properties makes it difficult to save for capital improvements – replacing roofs/windows and other maintenance that every home requires every 20 years. Additionally, the compact nature of this Lawrence Rd community allows for management staff to be onsite 5 days a week, which is simply not possible with scattered site developments.

Scattered site development is also not environmentally friendly and has a larger footprint. By building compactly, this development protects more open space and can offset its own energy usage through solar panels and net zero construction. The costs of design, regulation, and operations don't often vary much by building size. Thus, larger buildings allow developers to spread these fixed costs over more apartment units in a more centralized location. From an operations standpoint, it can cost almost as much to operate a 30-40 unit building as it does a 100-unit building. Ultimately, these fixed costs can be alleviated when looking for sites that can accommodate larger projects.

## Why not build affordable ownership opportunities?

The housing crisis on Cape Cod has reached a breaking point; since the pandemic began, the availability of homes has dwindled while home prices have skyrocketed. The Cape Cod Commission's [Regional Housing Market Analysis](#) found that the Lower Cape has a negligible year-round rental housing market despite high demands for year-round rentals. Furthermore, Barnstable County has three times less rental units than the national average.

Affordable homeownership units are more difficult to finance and subsidize. Typically, federal and local subsidies prioritize rental developments for lower-income residents, so very little funding exists for ownership projects.

## Will the buildings fit in with the neighborhood?

This is a tastefully designed development that will create a village type setting in Wellfleet. A variety of living environments are offered – from the clusters of family townhomes to the larger building. Elements of various local architectural styles have been incorporated into this project, and the bulk of the site's existing vegetation and tree mass along the perimeter will remain untouched, creating a minimum thirty-foot buffer zone between the community/abutting properties and preserving half of the property as virgin woodland.

## Will this be the only three-story building in Wellfleet?

The three-story building in the Lower Village fits in with several three- and four-story private homes on Long Pond Road. Other examples of three-story buildings in town include the Elementary School across the street, the Wellfleet Historical Society Building, and the Police Station.

## Who will manage this community and ensure that it is maintained?

POAH will be responsible for the on-site management of the units, and they have a proven track record of managing affordable residential communities across the country. The development will have site-based staff including a property manager, a maintenance superintendent, and a Community Impact resident services coordinator. The three site-based staff members will provide on-site coverage every weekday. In addition to these supports, POAH will collaborate with the CDP, the Homeless Prevention Council, and other Outer Cape non-profits to ensure that residents receive any needed support services.

## What impact will the development have on local schools?

In 2011, 127 students were enrolled in Wellfleet Elementary School. By 2019, the number of students enrolled had declined to 90. The Wellfleet Elementary School needs additional students to create a better learning environment and support teacher retention. We are hopeful that the development will support young families in finding a place to live so that the local school can get closer to higher desired enrollment.

## Will this development increase our already congested traffic?

The proposed one-way drive from Long Pond Road has access to a drop off location and parking lot for the Lower Village building, and this parking lot will then have an outlet to Lawrence Road. This one-way traffic pattern accomplishes several goals: it discourages use by non-residents, slows traffic for pedestrian safety, and avoids traffic issues between residents of the development and parents dropping off and picking up children at school.

The proposed vehicle flow will provide direct access to the center of Wellfleet and Route 6 in both directions at the Lawrence Road/School Street/Rt 6 traffic light. This configuration prevents

people from taking Long Pond Road across the overpass to the Main Street intersection, from which there is no left turn to get onto Route 6. It also provides the Fire Department and emergency vehicles with easy access from two different roads.

This traffic circulation is easily revised without change to the development plan because the one-way street can become a two-way street. Two-way access from the bottom of Lawrence Road to the parking lot of the Lower Village could eliminate Long Pond Road access. During the Summer season, the Elementary School is at a far lower capacity, which balances out any added traffic from summer tourists.

## Does this proposed project meet local zoning?

This project will be permitted under a state law known as 40B that is designed to encourage the development of affordable housing. The 40B law waives some local zoning requirements in exchange for a minimum of 25% of the development's units being affordable. Three-quarters of the apartments in this proposal will be affordable – much higher than the 25% minimum. We will be requesting some relief from local zoning to allow for a multi-family development and other minor diversions from local zoning by-laws. A comprehensive list of waivers will be made available to the public in the application for a Comprehensive Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Proposals for developments are not subject to Town Meeting Votes. Town Meeting approves the Zoning By-laws, but not individual developments. This project is being proposed under the State's 40B law which requires the Zoning Board of Appeals ("ZBA") to review and approve or deny the comprehensive permit application. The permitting process allows for input from local boards, departments, and committees (e.g., Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Department of Public Works, Local Housing Partnership, etc.). The ZBA and local boards will be responsible for the following local concerns: (i) health, (ii) safety, (iii) environmental, (iv) design, (v) open space, (vii) planning, and (viii) other local concerns.

Using the 40B law, another Developer could build a similarly sized project with only 25% of the units meeting the affordable housing needs of the community.

The development team is beginning the zoning and permitting approval process in April, which will involve a request for waivers from the zoning by-laws for functional and dimensional purposes.

## Does the proposal have to go to Town Meeting to get approval? Will the voters of Wellfleet have a say?

At their 2018 Town Meeting, Wellfleet's residents voted unanimously to allocate the last remaining large parcel of town-owned land (6 of the 9-acre site at 95 Lawrence Road) for the development of affordable rental housing. The town agreed to lease the site for just \$1 (one dollar) a year to emphasize affordability, provided the developer's project satisfies a list of standards approved by Wellfleet's Select Board

Proposals for developments are not subject to Town Meeting Votes. POAH and CDP, however, may seek Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding from the Town of Wellfleet to finance a small portion of construction and to demonstrate to State funding sources that the development has the support of the Town. CPA funding requests require approval by Town Meeting.

## What else could be built at this site?

The site is owned by the town and is dedicated for affordable housing purposes. Under the current conditions set by the town, only affordable housing can be built on the site.

## Won't this project be harmful to the environment?

The plan prioritizes sustainable site development by building primarily on previously developed/disturbed areas to leave the undisturbed woodlands in their natural state. The design maintains the local environment and preserves the distinctive landscape.

The design aims for net zero energy, producing as much energy as the development consumes on an annual basis. Furthermore, the development will feature many environmentally friendly components: including roof-mounted solar panels, all electric building systems, and low-flow plumbing fixtures.

## Won't this many units of housing on six acres threaten the quality of Wellfleet's water?

This development will feature a decentralized wastewater treatment system which utilizes an innovative/alternative secondary treatment system. POAH owns and operates two similar wastewater treatment facilities on Cape Cod.

This project will incorporate a new wastewater treatment plant located on site that would ensure that zero net nitrogen is released into the watershed.

*This document was prepared by the Community Development Partnership (CDP) in Eastham. The CDP advocates for the creation of more affordable homes on the Lower Cape and has extensive experience developing and managing affordable, safe, year-round places for families to live. This document will be updated as the proposed project is developed and modified to respond to community input and other factors.*



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[www.capecdp.org](http://www.capecdp.org)

The Community Development Partnership leads the Lower Cape in building a diverse year-round community of people who can afford to live, work and thrive here.

To accomplish our mission, we promote, develop and manage affordable housing; nurture the launch and growth of small businesses; and facilitate collaboration with business, non-profit and government partners. To find out more, go to [www.capecdp.org](http://www.capecdp.org)