

Erving Care Drive Housing Frequently Asked Questions- April 2024

1. What exactly are we voting on at the Town Meeting and will there be opportunities for further input on the project?

The Town Meeting will be asked to approve the Select Board conveying two parcels of Town-owned land to RDI through a long-term lease. The parcels are both approximately 2 acres in size, abutting the Library and Senior & Community Center parcels on either side of the proposed extension to Care Drive. If approved, the Select Board will then enter into a development agreement with RDI that sets forth the terms and conditions for the Town to lease the property, and for RDI to develop the property.

Once the Town and RDI have a development agreement in place, RDI will be able to proceed with designing the project. RDI will submit an application to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Comprehensive Permit in order to build the project. At that time, all Town boards and departments will have a chance to review the plans and provide input, and public hearings will be held to solicit community feedback.

2. How much is this costing the Town?

Erving will be responsible for constructing the public infrastructure to support the project. This includes extending Care Drive, extending water and sewer pipes, and installing a sewer pump station. This infrastructure will serve the existing Senior and Community Center and Library, proposed housing, and support potential future development to the rear of the property which will remain Town-owned and is not part of the housing development. Erving is in the process of gathering estimates, with the expectation of applying for State grants to cover some or all the costs.

RDI, as the developer, is responsible for the cost of constructing the housing and will apply for a combination of public and private funding. Currently the cost is estimated at \$15.6M, with approximately \$448,000 coming from local funds. The construction budget is preliminary and will change once designs are further along.

3. Will the Town's contribution increase my taxes?

Currently the Town is exploring grants, existing appropriations, and other special revenue sources to fund the proposed improvements. The Town is not seeking a change in levy capacity to fund the infrastructure improvements related to this project. Any increased service costs, such as water use, will be paid by the amount used by the development.

4. What will the age and income requirements be?

Both the senior and multi-generational apartments will offer affordable housing that is restricted, which means it must remain affordable over a long period of time and rented to households within certain income categories. Rents are based on Area Median Income, or AMI (for Erving, the "area" is all 26 Franklin County towns), which is set by HUD annually. Rents only go up if AMI goes up. Additionally, to be eligible to live in one of the 18 senior apartments, the head of household must be age 62 or over.

As proposed, the apartments at Care Drive will offer housing for households earning up to 30%, 50% and 60% of AMI, based on household size. As an example, a senior (household size of 1) earning annual social security income of \$19,000 could be eligible under the 30% AMI category, while a home health aide who has one child (household of 2) earning \$34,000 could be eligible under the 50% AMI category.

Current Maximum Income Limits for Erving (2024): 30%, 50%, and 60% Area Median Income

Income Category	Number of People in Household					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
60 Percent	\$46,020	\$52,560	\$59,160	\$65,700	\$70,980	\$76,260
50 Percent	\$38,350	\$43,800	\$49,300	\$54,750	\$59,150	\$63,550
30 Percent	\$23,010	\$26,280	\$29,580	\$32,850	\$35,490	\$38,130

Note: Income limits are set annually by HUD and are subject to change.

5. Doesn't Erving already have affordable housing?

No. Erving currently has 0% Affordable Housing units on the State's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). In MA, a state law known as Ch. 40B, requires every municipality to maintain at least 10% of its housing stock as restricted affordable housing.

Under Ch. 40B, communities without 10% affordable housing are subject to developments that are not required to be sensitive to the needs of the community. This project moves Erving in the direction of meeting its 10% goal and towards greater local control.

6. Won't this housing overburden our public infrastructure?

Erving's public water and sewer systems operate within existing capacity and both systems have the capacity for the proposed development. Erving has already invested in public road, water, and sewer infrastructure on Care Drive for the Library and Senior & Community Center projects. This project will help create enough demand to install a sewer pump station, which is needed to support the Library, Senior & Community Center, and any future development on Care Drive.

7. How will this project impact Town services?

Housing adjacent to the Senior & Community Center will create efficiencies in service and healthcare for our growing senior population. Many studies show that affordable, accessible housing for seniors reduces health care costs and improves mental and physical health.

Senior & Community Center services will be supplemented by on-site resident services to connect people to the resources they need.

From the Public Safety perspective, Fire Chief Wonkka anticipates an increase in service requests for medical responses to the facility and a small increase in the response to fire alarms, but believes that the service requests will not drastically affect the way the Fire Department operates currently. Chief Wonkka also notes that with the proximity to the Senior & Community Center and the Library, this residential living space would provide an excellent opportunity for educational instruction times as well as familiarity events with the public safety employees. At this time, Chief Wonkka feel that the Fire Department would be able to adequately handle any request for service increases.

Acknowledging that the Senior & Community Center was built at Care Drive as a result of the voters' desire for pursuing the development of Senior Housing, starting in 2003, Senior Center Director, Paula Betters, anticipates an increase in services as a result of the new housing. The Senior & Community Center already offers seniors with van services, physical and social activities, service referrals, lunches and brown bag recipients, and much more. Director Betters anticipates that higher participation may lead to the need for more programming and other services at the Center. If on-site food services were to expand, it may require capital improvements to the kitchen facilities.

During the process of building the new Library at Care Drive, there was acknowledgement that the Town was continuing to pursue Senior Housing at the proposed location and the Library was built

with that in mind. Library Director Abigail Baines, states that the Library has seen an increase in walking traffic from the local Erving housing by Lillian's Way, Semb Dr, Moore St. and the apartments by Weatherhead Apartments. Many patrons come to spend time in the facility, use Wi-Fi, computers, printing, ask for tech support, use the study rooms, stay and play for a while with their kids, as well as borrowing items. Director Baines would anticipate that the new housing, being within walking distance of the Library, would cause a similar type of increase in use and that higher participation may lead to the need for more programming and other services at the Library.

Lastly, the addition of housing at Care drive will also help support a new FRTA bus stop at the site. FRTA is open to adding a stop at Care Drive that can serve all uses on the site.

8. What is the Application Process? Do current Erving residents get first choice?

Initial lease up will be through an application and lottery process, that will occur once the housing is under construction. Anyone interested in living at Care Drive will submit an application by a specified deadline. If the household meets the income and age requirements (for senior units), they will be entered into the lottery.

A local preference may be applied to the initial lottery and lease-up of units. Any eligible applicant currently living in Erving, working for an employer in Erving, or who has a dependent enrolled in the Erving public schools, may be eligible for local preference. No more than 70% of units may be set aside for local preference applicants, and Erving must get approval from the State before implementing local preference. Local preference is **only** allowed at initial lease-up; it does not apply to the waitlist or future lotteries.

9. What if I own a home? Does that automatically exclude me?

Not necessarily. It depends on a household's individual circumstances and the type of subsidy that they are applying for – all the proposed apartments are subsidized, but some include federal or state vouchers as well. Each subsidy program has its own asset limits, as well as certain inclusions and exclusions. Assets, such as net proceeds from selling a home, must be reported on the application. For all apartments, a calculated portion of a household's assets is included as part of annual income for the purpose of determining eligibility. Generally, this development is intended for those who need housing, and there are restrictions on owning residential property.

10. When will the housing be ready to move into?

It depends on a lot of factors, including permitting, funding, and construction timelines. Optimistically, the housing could be ready for occupancy by 2028, at the earliest.

11. How long is the affordability period?

At a minimum, 30 years. This is dependent on requirements by funders, and if the Town wants to require a longer period through the lease agreement.

12. What happens if my income goes up after moving in? Do I have to move?

A household's expected income for the next 12 months is certified at lease up to ensure eligibility. If in the future the household's income increases above the income limit, they do not have to move out. When an over-income household chooses to move out, the apartment will be rented to a household that meets the income limits at that time.

13. I thought this project was only for Senior Housing. Why is multigenerational housing included?

Multigenerational housing can serve a range of households including seniors needing more than one bedroom, families caring for an elderly parent, and grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. Multi-generational housing was added to this project for several reasons:

- Including multi-generational housing into the mix makes the project financially possible.
- Housing costs are unaffordable for people earning average wages in town. For example, these recently posted jobs have full-time wages that are in line with the income targets for the multigenerational apartments, depending on household size:
 - Rose Ledge Auto Body Tech (starting wage) ~\$47,800
 - Renovators Supply Maintenance Worker ~\$37,500
 - O'Connell Care Home Health Aide ~\$33,400
 - Erving Dunkin Donuts ~\$31,300
- Based on RDI's waitlists for other affordable properties and programs in Erving and Franklin County, there are more non-senior households seeking housing than senior households
- Erving is losing workforce aged households (those under 65)
- Housing for all ages within a close walk to the Elementary School, Library, and Senior & Community Center, will have many cross-connecting benefits for the community.

14. Won't more children mean higher school costs?

New housing *can* increase school costs if expansion is needed to accommodate the influx of students. However, in Erving, enrollment at the Elementary School has been declining for several decades. Because State funding allocations to school districts are largely calculated on a per student basis, **declining enrollment means less State funding for the school**, placing more pressure on the local Town budget to make up the difference.

15. Why isn't market rate housing, or housing targeting higher income levels (80% - 120% AMI) included?

There is a strong need for housing at the proposed income levels in Erving. Approximately 35% of Erving households currently earn incomes below \$50,000 and may benefit from the housing at Care Drive. Additionally, higher income units and market rate units are not eligible for subsidies, which are needed to make the project work financially.

16. Why is the land lease for 99 years? Doesn't this limit us if the Town wants to do something different with the site? How is the Town protected?

The current proposal is to lease the land to RDI for 99 years. This is a standard length of time for this type of development, which is seen as a long-term investment for the community. Erving will enter into a development agreement, and before construction starts, a lease agreement with RDI that will set out the conditions of the lease, including an annual lease payment (i.e. structured tax agreement), and use of the land.

17. Will this create more tax revenue for our town?

Yes! Currently these parcels are publicly owned and do not generate tax revenue. The project will invest millions of dollars into the site, increasing its value, and produce annual revenue through an annual lease payment (i.e. structured tax agreement), similar to what has been arranged with solar developments. Residents of Care Drive will support the town through tax revenue (from rent, vehicle excise, sales tax, etc.) and through participation in the Senior & Community Center, Library, and other Town programs.