

**TOWN OF BEDFORD**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN**  
**For**  
**PLANNED PRODUCTION REGULATION**

**September 25, 2003**

**Town of Bedford**  
**For submission to Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Department of Housing and Community Development**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Bedford is located 15 miles to the northwest of Boston. The town is almost 14 square miles in size and has a population of 12,595. Unlike many suburban communities, Bedford almost doubles in size during the day as up to 24,000 persons work at its various commercial, industrial and institutional facilities giving the town one of the highest jobs to homes ratios in the state – 5:1. While this ratio is invigorating to the town’s tax base, it also contributes to a most pressing problem – traffic congestion. Activities that exacerbate this, including new housing construction, are viewed by many as only contributing to the problem. However, a strong sentiment also exists to preserve the small town character of Bedford along with its diversity. As market prices soar and mansions replace small homes, many residents agree that more affordable housing is needed. This housing should meet the needs of households encompassing a wide range of incomes, insuring that they can afford to live in town, enjoying the many benefits of this special community.

The town has examined its housing needs and outlined strategies to address these needs in its Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan (January 2002) and its HOME Consolidated Housing Plan (May 2003 submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). These studies reveal some of the town’s most pressing housing issues. These include escalating housing costs causing many residents to find it difficult to afford to remain in Bedford. Children who grew up in the town are now facing the possibility that they may not be able to return to raise their own families in Bedford. Long-term residents, especially the elderly, are finding themselves less able to maintain their large homes but unable to find alternative housing that better meets their current life styles. Families are finding it more difficult to “buy up”, purchasing larger homes as their families grow. Families connected to Hanscom Air Force Base, town employees and employees of other local businesses are increasingly hard pressed to find housing that is affordable in Bedford.

Furthermore, with growing outside pressures to create new housing through the comprehensive permit process, many town residents resent the fact that they are in a position of reacting to development proposals as opposed to being proactive in establishing their own housing agenda. There is a strong belief that local control over affordable housing will more appropriately meet housing needs and maintain Bedford’s small town character.

Bedford now has 4,708 housing units, according to the 2000 census, of which 4,621 are occupied. To meet the 10% standard, 462 units of housing would have to be “affordable” based on the state’s definition. With the current affordable housing inventory of 210 units (4.5% of its housing stock), at least 252 more affordable units will have to be produced to meet the 10% standard. The town would like to see at least 11% of Bedford’s housing units, or a total of 509 units, meet the state’s affordability standards. This will help prevent the town from dropping below the 10% threshold as the number of housing units increases and the 10% threshold becomes greater than 462.

The town is meeting these challenges and is finding ways to establish its housing agenda. Bedford was the very first community in the Commonwealth to pass the Community Preservation Act (CPA). These funds are proving to be a valuable resource for affordable housing. So far, CPA funds have been committed to three affordable housing projects and a housing consultant. Bedford also has a very active Housing Partnership and Housing Trust which is undertaking several affordable housing initiatives. Through the Duplex Conversion

Project the town is converting a two family house into two affordable condominiums. The units are about to be marketed. The Town was one of three suburban communities chosen to participate in the Suburban Rental Pilot Program. Through this program 447 Concord Road, currently vacant town owned land, will be the site of a 10-unit mixed income family rental development. The Condo Buy-Down project converts existing condominiums into affordable housing. Recently, the town joined the MetroWest HOME Consortium. The Partnership is also proactive in working with local developers who are utilizing the LIP program to ensure that their projects meet the town's affordable housing goals and strategies.

This Plan is submitted to comply with DHCD's Planned Production Regulation, MGL 7650 CMR31.07(1)(i). It is based on the Town of Bedford's Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan prepared in 2002 and the Consolidated Strategy and Plan for Affordable Housing prepared and submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in May 2003 to fulfill the Town's requirement for participation in the Metro West HOME Consortium. It incorporates elements of both of these documents and updates the projects and strategies the Town of Bedford is using to further its affordable housing agenda. The Plan is organized according to the structure outlined in the Planned Production Guidelines.

## Section 1 COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section examines: 1) the demographics and housing needs of Bedford's residents; 2) the current housing market and housing stock; 3) existing public housing; 4) the town's institutional structure as it relates to affordable housing; 5) current zoning regulations and permitting relevant to affordable housing; 6) challenges to developing affordable housing. This analysis provides insight into the nature of local affordable housing needs and may help guide development to meet those needs.

### **PERSONS IN NEED**

The 2000 Census from the U.S. Bureau of the Census counts Bedford's total population as 12,595. Approximately one-quarter, or 23.6% of the population (2,972) is school age – under the age of 18 – and another 23.6% (2,969) is over the age of 60, the remaining half of the population between 18 and 60 years. Of the 4,621 households living in Bedford, 35.4% included individuals under 18 years and 29% of the households included someone 65 years or older.

Bedford has a small minority population. Ninety-one percent of the population is white. According to the 2000 census Bedford's population is comprised of 2% Black or African American, 5% Asian, 1% two or more races, and 1% Hispanic or Latino of any race. Bedford households are comprised of 2% Black or African American; 4% Asian; .5% two or more races; 1% Hispanic or Latino, and 93.5% White.

The census also counted 4,708 total housing units, 98.2% that are occupied (4,621 units) with an overall vacancy rate of 1.8%, 0.3% for owner-occupied housing and 2.6% for rental units. Of the occupied units, 80.2% are owner-occupied with less than 1,000 rental units in town, 916 units specifically. The average household size of the owner-occupied units was 2.75 persons whereas it was 1.98 for renter-occupied units.

**Extremely Low-income (0-30% of area median income)<sup>1</sup>** - Two hundred ninety-nine out of a total of 4,625 households in Bedford are extremely low-income, according to the 2000 census. This represents 6% of all households. Half of these households are tenants. Sixty-three percent of these renter households pay over 35% of their income for rent. The other 50% of extremely low-income households own their homes. Eighty-eight percent of them pay over 30% of their income for housing. After paying their monthly housing costs, a large majority of the nearly 300 extremely low-income households in Bedford are left with little income to pay for other necessities.

Among the elderly (65 years and over), 15% are extremely low-income. This is in contrast to 3% of households under 64 and 6% of all households who are in this lowest income group.

Comparing the incomes of minority racial and ethnic groups to all households in Bedford reveals that while 6% of Bedford households are extremely low-income, 13% of Asian households and

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<sup>1</sup> 2000 Census data was collected in 1999. Therefore, the 1999 Boston area median income was used when calculating 2000 census data. The 1999 area median income was \$62,700 and 30% of area median income was \$18,800. The 2003 area median income is \$80,800.

57% of Hispanic or Latino households are extremely low-income. There are no Black or African American households who are in this income group. Although these percentages are high, they represent few households. There are only 34 Hispanic and Latino households in Bedford, so 57% represents only 19 households. Of the 185 Asian households, the 13% extremely low-income households account for 24 households. However, 275 households make up the 6% white extremely low-income households.

**Low-Income (31% to 50% of area median income)<sup>2</sup>** - Seven percent, or 338, of Bedford households are low-income. The 2000 census shows that 46% (160) of the low-income households rent their units. Of these renter households, 70% pay more than 30% of their income for rent. Fifty-four percent (190) low-income households own their home. Fifty-one percent of these homeowners pay over 30% or more of their income on housing.

Sixteen percent of elderly households are low-income. This is in contrast to 4% of households under 64 and 7% of all households.

According to the 2000 census, 18% of Black or African American households, 2% of Asian, 10% of households with two or more races, and 20% of Hispanic or Latino households are low-income, while only 7% of all households are low-income. This represents 12 Black or African American households, 3 Asian households, 2 households with two or more race, and 7 Hispanic or Latino households. Seven percent (321) of white households fall into the low-income category.

**Moderate-Income (51% to 80% of median income)<sup>3</sup>** -Ten percent (452) of households in Bedford are moderate-income. In this income group, 39% are renters and 61% are homeowners. The housing cost burden on renters in this income group is a bit less than the other lower income groups. Forty-one percent of the moderate income renters are paying over 30% of their income for rent and 28% are paying 35% or more of their income towards housing. Thirty-two percent of the moderate-income homeowners are paying over 30% of their income for housing costs.

Fourteen percent of elderly households are moderate-income. This is in contrast to 8% of households under 64 and 10% of all households.

Six Black or African American households (9%), 9 Asian households (5%), 5 (28%) of households with two or more races, and 432 or 10% of white households fall into this category. There are no Hispanic or Latino households who are moderate income.

**Middle-Income – (81-95% of median income)<sup>4</sup>** - Data from the 2000 census indicates that approximately 7% of households (301) are middle-income in Bedford. Only 27% of middle-income residents rent their unit. Of these 14% pay over 30% of their income for housing and only 4% pay over 35% of their income for housing. Seventy-three percent of middle-income residents own their home. Twenty-three percent of these homeowners pay over 30% of their income on housing and 18% pay over 35% of their income for housing.

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<sup>2</sup> At the time of the 2000 census (1999 income data), 50% to 80% of area median income was \$18,810 to \$31,350.

<sup>3</sup>Fifty percent to 80% of the 1999 area median income was \$31,350 to \$50,160.

<sup>4</sup>Eight percent to 95% of the 1999 area median income was \$50,160 to \$59,565.

Seven percent of elderly households are middle-income. This is close to the 6% of households under 64 and 7% of all households.

Five percent of Asian households, totaling 8, fall into this income group. White households make up the rest of income category.

In addition to looking at the needs of Bedford residents based on incomes, elderly residents and other groups have their own issues. Examining the characteristics of these groups helps to further understand the housing situation in Bedford. The following looks at Bedford's households based on other demographic perspectives.

**Elderly** - Eighteen percent of Bedford's population is elderly (65 years old or over). This represents a 30% increase in the elderly population since the 1990 census. (There were 1,780 persons over 65 counted in the 1990 census and 2,311 counted in the 2000 census). According to 2000 census, 31% of elderly households are extremely low and low-income and another 14% are moderate-income. These means that 45% of elderly households make under 80% of median income and would be income eligible for most state and federal housing programs. In contrast, for households under 64 years old, only 7% are extremely low and low-income and only 8% are moderate income.

The latest census data also reveals that 56% of elderly renters pay more than 30% of their income for rent. Comparatively, 25% of renters under 64 years old pay over 30% of their income. This represents about 163 elderly households who are already paying too high percentage of their income on housing. While rents rise, many elderly incomes are fixed. Over time, they will be forced to devote greater percentages of their income to housing.

Seventy-five percent of households over 65 own their home. For elderly homeowners, the cost burdens are greater than for younger homeowners. Twenty-one percent of owners 65 years old and over, compared to 14% of those under 64, pay 30% or more of their incomes for housing costs. Most elderly have owned their homes for many years. Sixty-three percent have owned homes since 1969 or earlier. Only 17% bought their home after 1980. In contrast, 77% of homeowners under 65 bought their homes after 1980. For the elderly, this means that most no longer carry a mortgage on their property. Therefore, their monthly housing costs should be lower. Despite this, due to their proportionately lower income, elderly homeowners are still paying a greater percentage of their income to own a home. Since most elderly are on fixed incomes, their incomes will not rise to meet increasing housing costs and the expenses of maintenance and repair that aging properties require.

Furthermore, those 65 and over are more likely to live alone. Forty one percent of elderly households consist of one person. Only 15% of households under 65 are single person households.

Ashby Place, an 80-unit senior housing project managed by the Bedford Housing Authority, is the only affordable housing project set-aside for seniors in town. However, there are few services provided. The frail elderly who no longer can live independently face a difficult time finding reasonably priced assisted living options. Carleton-Willard Village in Bedford is a relatively expensive elder living residence with services. It is unaffordable to most local seniors and the wait for a unit is over two years. Without reasonably priced facilities with services within Bedford, many elderly move to facilities in Billerica or Burlington, for example.

**Renters** - Based on the Boston area median income, the maximum affordable monthly rent (30% of income), including utilities, for a very low income household is \$556; for low-income families it is \$928; for moderate-income families \$1,484; and for middle-income families it is \$1,855. It should also be noted that 65% of Bedford renters in the 2000 census did pay for one or more utilities in addition to their rent. Fifty percent of renters are single person households.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition in order to afford (paying no more than 30% of gross income) the Boston area's 2002 Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a one bedroom apartment, a family would need an income of \$42,960. Similarly, to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment requires an income of \$53,720. These rents are affordable for middle and moderate-income households, but not for very low and low-income households in the area who, in 2002, earn up to \$22,250 and \$37,100 respectively.

**Owners** - Based on the 2000 census, 80% of housing units in Bedford are owner occupied. Sixteen percent of all owners (543 out of 3404 homeowner households) are paying more than 30% of their incomes on housing costs. **Eighty-eight percent of the very low-income owners** (106 households), **51% of the low-income owners** (79 households) and **32% of the moderate-income owners** (73 households) pay over 30% of their incomes on housing costs. This totals 258 homeowner households, who are income eligible for many state and federal housing programs, but for whom housing is absorbing an excessive portion of their income.

According to Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), in 2001 the median single-family home price in Bedford was \$395,000. The maximum price that a median income Bedford family can afford is \$259,098. That leaves an affordability gap of \$135,902 between sales prices and the amount a local family can afford to buy. While housing prices have risen 50% from 1998 to 2001 (Greater Boston Housing Report Card), incomes are not rising as fast. Many existing homeowners in Bedford would have a hard time finding an affordable home today.

**Size of Households (Single, Two-person, and Large Families)** - Seventy-four percent of Bedford households are family households. (The U.S. Census defines a family as a group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.) Thirty-four percent of all households have children under 18. Four percent of households are headed by a single female with children under 18. According to the 2000 census, 22% percent of households in Bedford consist of a single person, 34% are two person households, and about 7% of the households consist of five or more people. The average household size is 2.6. Among those 65 and over, 22%, or 500, live alone. Most of these (402) are single females living alone.

**Homeless and Special Needs Populations** - There are very few homeless families from Bedford. The police report that they encounter 3-4 cases a year. They refer the homeless to Bedford Youth and Family Services or the Council on Aging who will then assist the family to find a shelter placement. Families are referred to shelters in Waltham, Framingham or Boston. There are also few homeless individuals. This year the town's social service agencies have handled 12 homeless cases. Nine individuals lost their homes when their SRO was torn down. One family, not originally from Bedford, ended up in a Bedford motel. A shelter placement was found for the family. Two other households were evicted due to tenant issues.

Bedford's community nurse reported that there are 4 HIV/AIDS diagnosed cases in Bedford. However, information about the individuals is confidential, so we do not know who these persons are or their circumstances.



There are eight residential homes in Bedford for clients of the Department of Mental Retardation. These facilities have the capacity to house 50 individuals. The Elliott Center, Edinburg Center, Cooperative for Human Service, and TILL manage these homes. Department of Mental Health clients are served by the public housing development on Railroad Avenue. This facility houses eight individuals.

The Bedford Council on Aging has received over 500 requests for housing assistance during the past year. The COA assists the elderly with finding assisted living facilities and with home safety and adaptation. Home care services are provided by several different agencies including Emerson Hospital, Visiting Nurses Association (VNA), Minuteman Senior Services, and Metropolitan.

The COA conducted a study on home safety among elderly residents. The Council on Aging, the police and fire departments inspected ten elderly residences. Eight of the ten had serious problems with wiring. This caused a number of safety problems for the residents including not being able to run all appliances, such as air conditioners during the summer. This is a serious issue for the frail elderly. There is also an issue among the frail elderly concerning smoke alarms. Since many elderly are not able to reach and turn off a smoke alarm, some have disconnected them.

## **HOUSING MARKET**

**Home Sales** — Housing prices in Bedford are out of reach for many moderate and middle-income families. According to the Boston Globe's web site (Boston.com), Bedford ranks 32 out of 351 cities and towns for single-family property values in Massachusetts. In the ten-year period 1992-2002 the median sales price for single-family homes in Bedford rose 101% from \$212,250 to \$427,500. (Source: The Warren Group (Banker and Tradesman)). In comparison, from 1992 to 2002 the area median income rose 45%, while housing costs rose more than double that rate.

This trend continues as evidenced by sales price and income changes in recent years. In a one-year period from 2000 to 2001 the price of a single-family home increased 10% and the next year prices increased nearly another 9%. (Source: The Warren Group (Banker and Tradesman)). During these two years, while the sales price for a single-family house rose 19%, the area median income increased by only 13%. The cost of housing is far outpacing the rise in incomes. It is becoming increasingly difficult to afford to purchase a home in Bedford.

Condominiums are even less affordable. In 2002 the median sales price for a condominium was \$508,000 compared to \$427,500 for a single family home. There are fewer condominiums in Bedford so the number of sales is comparatively low. In 2002 there were 30 condominiums and 120 single-family houses sold.

As for the trends in the volume of market activity, the number of home sales, both single-family houses and condominiums, declined somewhat beginning in 1998. Home sales were at a peak in 1995 with 279 sales. In 2002 there were only 180 sales, an increase over the 162 sales in 2001. However, prices continue to escalate. Vacancy rates have reduced by 1% over the past ten years. The market in Bedford remains strong.

**Income** - The Boston area median family income in 1989 was \$49,460 (1990 U.S. Census). The 1999 area median family income is \$62,700 (source HUD). This is an increase of 26.8%

over 10 years. However, the median income in Bedford according to the 2000 Census exceeds the area median income. The Bedford median income as calculated in the 2000 census is \$87,514. The median income for homeowners was \$102,043 while the median income for renter households was \$47,031.

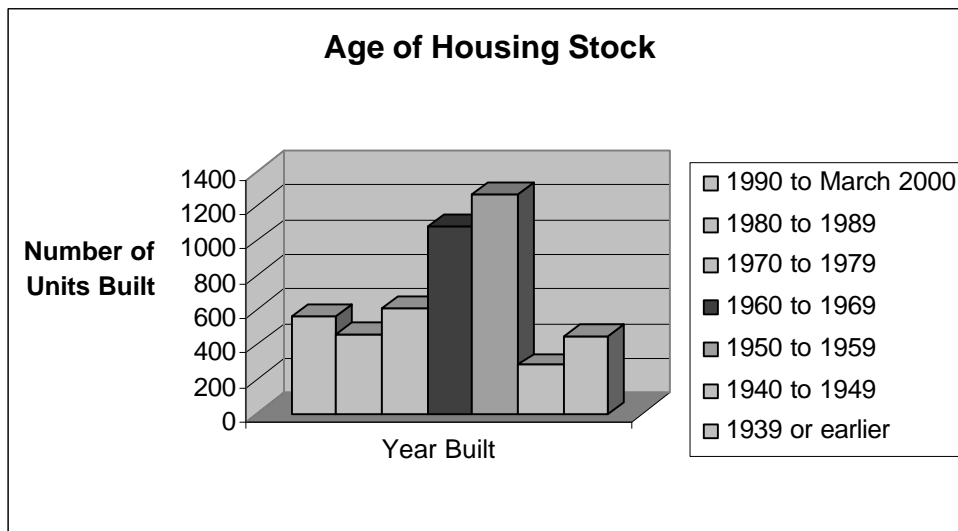
**Rents** - The 2000 census reports a median gross rent of \$1009. This is consistent with the information acquired through a housing survey conducted by the Bedford Housing Partnership in December 2001. The study showed renters paid an average of \$1,100 per month for rent. They also paid for their own utilities averaging \$131 per month for electricity and heat.

While the census indicates a count of 916 rental units in Bedford, this figure includes the military trailers (216 units), military housing off of Pine Hill Road (16 units), Bedford Village apartment complex (72 units out of 96 are affordable), and Bedford Housing Authority projects (100 units). Therefore, 44% of the 916 rental units are not available to the general rental market. Other units included in the 916 are Colonial Village on Roberts Drive (44 units), one boarding house in town on North Road (22 units), and homes with accessory apartments. There is great demand for this very limited rental supply in town and any listings go fast. Local brokers typically only handle privately owned units in small, multi-family structures as the other rental opportunities have their own management, waiting lists and screening processes.

**Housing Stock** - The 2000 Census counted 4,708 housing units in Bedford. Of these, 4,621 are occupied and 87 are vacant. There are 3705 owner-occupied units (80% of occupied units) and 916 renter-occupied units (20% of occupied units). Single-family homes make up 83% of the stock (73% detached and 10% attached). Eight percent of housing units are in 2 to 4 unit structures. Only 7% are in multiple unit structures and of these 3% are in structures greater than 20 units. Mobile homes account for the remaining 2% of the housing units.

Most of Bedford's housing stock was built prior to 1970. However, less than 10% of the units were built prior to 1940. Another 6% were built from 1940-1949. Most of Bedford's growth occurred in the 1950's and 1960's when half of its current housing units were built.

A report to Congress estimated that 74% of housing units built prior to 1980 contain lead paint. This translates into over 3,000 housing units in Bedford possibly having lead paint.



It is difficult to compare 1990 and 2000 census data because of a change in the counting of the housing units at Hanscom Air Base included in Block 906 E. In the 1990 census these units were counted as part of the Bedford numbers despite the fact that the housing is actually physically located in the Town of Lincoln. The 2000 census figures have corrected this problem by taking the housing units out of the Bedford count. However, the 1990 and 2000 data are not easily reconcilable. The Bedford Comprehensive Plan corrected this problem with the 1990 data for the existing housing supply and the results are as follows:

### Housing Supply – 1990 to 2000

	1990		1990 Corrected		2000	
	# of Units	% of Units	# of Units	% of Units	# of Units	% of Units
Occupied Units	4,479	97.3	4,088	97.1	4,621	98.1
Owner-Occupied	3,195	71.3	3,059	74.8	3,705	80.2
Renter-Occupied	1,284	28.7	1,029	25.2	916	19.8
Total Vacant	123	2.7	120	2.9	87	1.8
Owner Vacancy Rate		1.3				0.3
Rental Vacancy Rate		2.3				3.0
Total Units	4,602	100.0	4,208	100.0	4,708	100.0

This corrected data indicates a significant increase in the overall number of housing units built over the past decade – 500 units or a 12% increase. This increase is higher than the 5% increase experienced for the metropolitan area as a whole and was limited to the owner-occupied housing stock with 646 new units created and a loss of 113 rental units. The increase in the owner-occupied stock is due to the proliferation of small, high-end market single-family subdivisions and condominium development, whereas the loss in rental units is most likely because of condominium conversion activity.

### **PUBLIC HOUSING**

The Bedford Housing Authority manages 92 state public housing units, 8 rooms of state 689 (Department of Mental Health) housing and 22 state funded rental vouchers. The authority does not manage any federally funded public housing units. The Housing Authority has five members of the board (one appointed by the state) as well as one full-time staff person and three part-time employees. The Authority manages the following developments:

### **Ashby Place 1 and 2**

Ashby Place was developed in two phases under the Chapter 667 Program for state-assisted elderly and handicapped housing. Together, the two phases total 80 one-bedroom units. The development consists of ten residential buildings and a community building built on five acres. Four of the 80 units are handicapped accessible. The initial occupancy dates for Phases I and II were June 1969 and June 1974, respectively. There is currently a waiting list of 25 applicants. Bedford residents have preference. This means Bedford residents on the waiting list move to the top. Bedford residents are rarely on the waiting list for more than one year. Veterans who are Bedford residents are given preference.

The project provides some services and amenities including emergency pull alarms in each bedroom and bath, Board of Health nurses for monthly blood pressure clinics, a community building for tenant functions, and Meals on Wheels delivered daily. The Town van provides daily transportation for shopping and a computer, laundry facilities, and a library are available on site. A tenant organization provides input into the budget for the property.

### **Elm Street**

The Elm Street project was built for returning veterans and their families through the State's Chapter 200 Program. The project includes six two-story duplexes with six two-bedroom units and six three-bedroom units. The development was initially occupied in June of 1951. Services and amenities include referrals to family support agencies, convenient access to downtown playgrounds and schools, the desirable local school system, and a computer available at Ashby Place for resident use. The waiting list includes 70 families. Preference is first given to veterans and Bedford residents. Elm Street residents do not have a formal tenant organization but do provide input to the housing authority on the development's budget. Within the last two years improvements were made to update bathrooms and kitchens, and roofs will be replaced during the next few years.

### **20 Railroad Avenue**

This project was built through the State-assisted Chapter 689 Program for special needs populations and is staffed by the Department of Mental Health. The project has two units, each with four bedrooms to assist eight individuals. It was first occupied in 1993. Special services include 24-hour professional management staff, central air conditioning, location adjacent to a conservation area, and proximity within walking distance to local stores.

### **MRVP Vouchers**

The Bedford Housing Authority administers 19 project-based MRVP rental subsidies funded by the state that are directed to the affordable units at the Bedford Village development. Additionally, the Housing Authority has another three mobile rental subsidies through the state's Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP). There are 50 applicants on the waiting list. Preference is given to Bedford residents on the list.

Development	Size	Type	State or Federal
Ashby Place I & II	80 units	Chapter 667- Elderly and Handicapped	State
Elm Street	12 units	Chapter 200 - Veterans	State
Bedford Village	19 units	MRVP Project Based Rental Vouchers	State
Scattered Site Mobile Vouchers	3 units	Rental vouchers	State
Railroad Avenue	8 units	Chapter 689 - Department of Mental Health	State

The Ashby Place and Elm Street are older developments in need of upgrades. The Housing Authority has reserve funds for repairs such as roof replacement. However, Elm Street is in need of complete kitchen and bath replacement. The Housing Authority applied, unsuccessfully, to the state for modernization funds for new kitchens and baths. They will try to upgrade units, one at a time, as they become vacant. Reserves will be used, but funds are limited and are only enough to renovate limited number of units.

## **INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND COORDINATION**

The town of Bedford has a number of Town Committees and local organizations that are involved in some way in the production or preservation of housing.

### **The Bedford Housing Partnership**

The Bedford Housing Partnership includes the town's Fair Housing Committee, Affordable Housing Committee and members at large, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, to implement affordable housing programs and encourage the growth of affordable housing in Bedford. In 1979 the Fair Housing Committee was created to address issues of fairness and equal access with respect to housing policies and practices. In January 1987 the Planning Board appointed an ad hoc committee to oversee the sale of six affordable units developed as part of Shawsheen Ridge condominium project. This Committee subsequently became the Affordable Housing Committee.

In 1991 the Fair Housing Committee and Affordable Housing Committee began meeting jointly and voted to form a Housing Partnership under the state Housing Partnership Program, making Bedford eligible for a broader range of state funding programs.

### **Bedford Housing Trust**

In 1994 the Housing Partnership incorporated the Bedford Housing Trust, a nonprofit organization with its own tax-exempt status, which can receive gifts of money and other property and expend funds to produce affordable housing. The corporate membership of the Housing Trust is drawn from the Housing Partnership with non-voting membership open to anyone with an interest in affordable housing for Bedford.

### **The Bedford Housing Authority**

The Bedford Housing Authority was established in 1948 to initially provide housing assistance to returning veterans and their families who were experiencing difficulties finding decent, safe and affordable housing. During the last few decades the Housing Authority has built and now manages 100 units of government-assisted housing for low-income households who pay 25% to 30% of the net incomes in rent. The Housing Authority has five members of the board (one appointed by the state) as well as one full-time staff person and three part-time employees.

### **The Bedford Community Preservation Committee**

The Community Preservation Committee is the Town's most recent addition to local governance, charged with the oversight of funds raised through Bedford's passage of the Community Preservation Fund through a public referendum on March 10, 2001. The Community Preservation Act establishes the authority for municipalities in Massachusetts to create a Community Preservation Fund derived from a surcharge of up to 3% of the property tax, to be matched by the State based on a funding commitment of approximately \$26 million annually. The Act requires at least 10% of the monies raised be distributed to each of three categories - open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. The community is allowed flexibility in distributing the remaining 70% among the three categories and certain recreational uses. The Act further requires that a Community Preservation Committee of five to nine members be established that represents various boards or committees in the community to recommend to the legislative body how to spend the Community Preservation Fund. Bedford was the first municipality in the Commonwealth to pass this act.

### **The Bedford Historic Preservation Commission**

The Bedford Historic Preservation Commission includes seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to preserve, protect, develop and manage the town's historical, archeological and cultural assets. The Commission is granted the authority to accept contributions, enter into contracts and acquire property of historic significance to further its mission.

### **The Bedford Conservation Commission**

Members of the Conservation Commission are appointed by the Board of Selectmen to oversee the protection of wetlands, waterways and floodplains and to acquire and maintain open space for the protection of natural resources and the enjoyment of residents. Regulations require review by the Conservation Commission of all proposed developments within 100 feet of wetlands, water bodies, waterways and floodplains, and within 200 feet of perennial streams and rivers. The Commission also proposes the purchase of conservation land, executes these purchases, and oversees the maintenance and use of these lands.

### **The Bedford Council on Aging**

The Bedford Council on Aging provides a wide range of housing services and recreational programs to seniors in Bedford. The organization also provides assistance to family caregivers and promotes an interdependent multigenerational community. Specific services include coordinating in-home services, educating the community about aging, offering on-site health

services and screenings, creating volunteer and employment programs for seniors, providing individual counseling, and offering social and recreational activities. In regard to housing, staff is available to provide elders with housing assistance, particularly in their attempts to secure alternative housing options in Bedford.

### **Bedford Youth and Family Services**

Bedford Youth and Family Services strives to improve family development and healthy lifestyles by providing the following services: supportive counseling, community education, and youth empowerment and support. In addition, the department collaborates with the Town of Burlington in the provision of Veterans Services for Bedford residents. Since this collaboration began in January 2000, the department has been able to provide high visibility and regular Bedford hours.

## **REGULATIONS AND PERMITTING**

**Zoning** is the principal tool that municipalities use to control land use and development. Bedford's Zoning Bylaw divides the town into 10 classes of property including the following:

- *Residential Districts*
  - Residence R
  - Residence A
  - Residence B
  - Residence C
- *Business Districts*
  - Limited Business (A)
  - General Business (B)
  - Commercial
- *Industrial Districts*
  - Industrial (B)
  - Industrial Park (A)
- *Conservancy District*
  - Flood Plain/Wetland District (an overlay district whose boundaries and regulations are superimposed on the Residential, Business and Industrial Districts)

The Bedford Zoning Bylaw has a number of provisions that are conducive to affordable housing development including the following:

### **Accessory Apartment Bylaw**

The Bylaw defines an accessory apartment as a second dwelling unit located within a structure constructed as a single-family dwelling, subordinate in size to the principal dwelling unit and separated from it in a manner that maintains the appearance of the structure as a one family unit. The Bylaw allows the development of these accessory units as-of-right if they meet certain requirements (i.e., building permit required, only one accessory unit per property, the accessory unit can not exceed 30% of the gross floor area of the entire property, the property must be at least 1,800 square feet including the basement, the accessory unit must have no more than two bedrooms, the unit must be connected to public water and sewer, there must be an enclosed stairway to maintain the appearance of the single-family home, and at least two off-street parking spaces have to be available for the principal dwelling and one for the accessory

apartment) to increase the number of small rental units in town, to increase the range of housing choice in town, to encourage greater diversity of the population with particular attention to young adults and senior citizens, and to encourage a more economic and energy-efficient use of the town's housing supply while maintaining the appearance and character of the town's single-family neighborhoods.

### **Cluster Zoning Provision**

Section 8 of the Zoning Bylaw pertains to cluster development that is allowed by special permit from the Planning Board for a pattern of land development that is an alternative to the standard subdivision permitted in Residential Districts. Cluster development is intended to encourage the conservation of open space and the efficient use of land in harmony with its natural features. Consequently, parts of the development site tend to have greater density than what is allowed for a typical subdivision, somewhat improving the economies for affordable housing. Cluster zoning is allowed upon a single tract of land that has an area of not less than five times the minimum lot area of the zoning district within which it is situated. The parcel must also be under one owner. The number of units permitted must not exceed the larger of the number of units that could be built in a standard subdivision or the number obtained by dividing the total area, exclusive of flood plain or wetlands, by the minimum standard lot size permitted in the zoning district. Only single-family detached homes are allowed. Common land must include at least 25% of the land area of the site and no more than 50% of the common land can be situated in a flood plain or wetland. A greenbelt is also required that restricts development within 50 feet of the boundaries for the tract.

### **Planned Residential Development**

Planned Residential Developments (PRD) are allowed by Section 9 of the Zoning Ordinance with many of the same provisions of the cluster development but allowing for a greater mixture of housing types at somewhat greater densities than what is permitted in the Residential Districts and cluster developments. The number of permitted units is calculated by dividing the area of the site, exclusive of flood plain or wetlands, by the minimum standard lot size included in the zoning district. However, this density can be increased by 15% by conveying to the Town land that is not within the PRD tract but in private ownership and unencumbered by any restriction. Density can also be doubled if 50% of the additional units, but not less than 10% of the total units in the PRD, meet the state affordability requirements under the Local Initiative Program including being affordable to those earning at or below 80% of median income and subject to deed restrictions to insure affordability in perpetuity. Only single-family units and accessory units are allowable.

### **Commercial Mixed-Use Provision**

The Zoning Bylaw also allows residential development in Limited Business Districts under site plan approval.

### **Industrial Mixed-Use Provision**

The Town passed a zoning amendment that allows housing in a mixed-use setting, including affordable housing, in industrial districts. The amendment "is intended to create mixed commercial, residential, and open space in areas where the visual and physical dominance of the automobile is made secondary to pedestrian needs; to encourage pedestrian activity by creating a pleasant, rich and diverse experience for pedestrians; to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution by providing opportunities for retail services, housing and employment in close proximity; and to encourage the sharing of parking lots and driveway curb cuts, minimizing the amount of paved parking surface area, and reducing traffic congestion." Multi-family housing is allowed if at least 25% of the total number of units is affordable to households earning at or



below 80% of area median income. The amendment also includes language regarding affirmative marketing requirements and resale restrictions to maintain affordability in perpetuity.

### **Article 39 of the Town's General Bylaws**

Another regulation relating to affordable housing is Article 39 of the Town's General Bylaws. This regulation requires that a minimum amount of land be reserved by the developer for purchase by the Town for affordable housing purposes as a condition of approval for new residential subdivisions. This regulation requires that at least 10% but no less than one-half acre of the buildable area be reserved for housing purposes, the location of this land to be determined by the Planning Board. Alternatively, the developer may elect to enter into a partnership agreement with the Town to build subsidized and/or affordable housing units on the site or provide an alternate cash contribution to the Town or to a nonprofit housing assistance corporation or trust, designated by the Board of Selectmen in lieu of payment to the Town to support affordable housing elsewhere. This cash contribution is calculated by multiplying \$5,000 times each buildable acre or a fraction of the entire proposed subdivision. There has not been land acquisition through this regulation, as it requires payment of the full market value of the property as well as Town Meeting approval. However, the Town did receive a cash contribution for one particular project.

### **Zoning bylaw revisions**

The Town Planning Board regularly revises the Zoning Bylaw keeping it current with market conditions and new needs as they arise. For example, the Town Planner is interested in working on an ordinance for the development of Over 55 Housing, also referred to as Senior Residential Developments.

### **Building permits**

Building permits provide another regulatory tool for the town to control development, insuring that all new property development and improvements comply with the state's building code. During the last several years there have been some new trends regarding building activity in Bedford. First, due to the escalating costs associated with purchasing property, an increasing number of residents are opting to expand their current homes in the form of an additional story or wing, to avoid the high purchase prices of "buying up" in the community as their families grow. Second, properties have been acquired followed by requests to demolish the existing homes and replace them by much larger houses. This trend is occurring in other affluent towns in the Boston area – a part of the "mansionization" of the suburbs. There have been only about a dozen "tear downs" to date in Bedford, however, there is growing concern that this trend might escalate given the experience of nearby towns. Third, this "mansionization" process is also occurring in subdivision development as evidenced by the new residential areas of Page Hill, Sweeney Ridge and the revolutionary area off of Davis Road, with home prices of well over \$1 million. The first home that was priced over \$1 million was permitted in the early 90's for over \$700,000, but it included more than seven acres of property. These new homes are built on much smaller sites, each relatively close to adjacent homes. Fourth, presumably due to the steep increases in property values and fewer site options, the level of residential permitting activity is down from prior years. While building permit activity for new home development was upwards to 91 permits in 1994, only 24 such permits were processed in fiscal year 2001 (July 2000 to June 2001) and an additional 77 permits were directed to new home additions. In fiscal year 2002 (July 2001 to June 2002) 17 permits were issued for the development of new homes.

The Town can process building permit applications within a week to ten days if it receives a complete application. Because time is money when development is concerned, the quick processing of Town permits is helpful when creating affordable housing.

## **CHALLENGES**

The major factors that impede the development of affordable housing fall into the following categories: high cost of housing, land, and construction; availability of financing; the “mansionsization” trend; and capacity.

- The high cost of construction and purchasing property are obstacles to creating additional affordable housing. With development costs as high as \$200,000-\$300,000 per unit, large public subsidies are required to make it affordable. Financing for these projects is complicated and competitive.
- Recent real estate trends show pressure on middle-income housing--\$200,000 to \$300,000. These homes offer an avenue for high priced development either by demolishing the existing home and building a larger home in its place or by expanding and upgrading the existing home. Smaller homes offered a more affordable housing option. The loss of these properties has an impact on the affordability of housing and the diversity of Bedford's population.
- Bedford has a very active Housing Partnership and Housing Trust. Volunteer members, among other activities, manage development projects. Paid staff includes the Assistant Town Administrator and a housing consultant. Bedford is a small town and has to rely on this network to carry out its housing agenda.

## Section 2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS

### HOUSING OBJECTIVES

During the development of the Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan (January 2002) and the Town's most recent Consolidated Plan (May 2003), numerous meetings and Public Hearings were held. The following housing objectives were identified based on the input received from these meetings and the needs documented by the housing studies. These objectives represent the basis on which the housing strategies described later in this document were developed:

- **To meet local housing needs along the full range of incomes, promoting diversity and the stability of individuals and families living in Bedford.** It can be argued that diversity in a community contributes to local health and vitality, that differences enrich us all. Many of the local leaders interviewed through this project spoke eloquently about the advantages of maintaining what diversity still exists in Bedford and the need to stimulate greater heterogeneity related to economic, age, religious, racial and ethnic differences. Certainly the preservation and production of affordable housing is a proven method for promoting diversity, allowing those individuals and families with more limited means to afford to live in town, particularly when the housing market is becoming increasingly oriented to the affluent. Solutions need to be found to enable children who grew up in town to return to raise their own families here, to offer town employees the opportunity to live in the community in which they work, to insure that Metco families have the option of moving to where their children are being educated, to provide housing alternatives to elderly residents who have spent much of their lives in town but now require alternatives to their oversized single-family homes, and to offer families the flexibility of moving to larger homes as their families grow. The town should strive to create new environments to allow current residents to remain in Bedford despite changing housing needs, but also to offer citizens with a wider range of interests and lifestyles additional housing options such as mixed-use housing, senior residential developments, supportive housing alternatives, live-work spaces, artists lofts, etc. – all feasible within the context of the small town.
- **To leverage other public and private resources to the greatest extent possible.** Because Bedford is a small town that does not receive federal funding for affordable housing on an entitlement basis and because it does not have large pockets of poverty that make it a target for state funding, the town needs to be creative in how it can leverage both public and private resources to make affordable housing development possible. State agencies recognize the importance of suburban localities doing their fair share in housing lower income households and want to be supportive of affordable housing initiatives, nevertheless, the town needs to be strategic in how it invests its limited resources towards the production of new housing opportunities.
- **To ensure that new housing creation is harmonious with the existing community.** New affordable housing development should be harmonious with the existing community, becoming an amenity that blends well within the architectural context of Bedford. Therefore, developments to the greatest extent possible should incorporate a number of characteristics – mixed-income, covering a wide range of income needs; low to medium density, scattered-site, eliminating huge impacts in any one part of the

community; and should be well designed to make maximum use of any natural attributes of development sites.

- **To surpass the 10% State standard for affordable housing.** There is currently a 252-unit gap between the State's affordable housing standard (10% of the year-round housing stock that has been subsidized by the federal or state government to benefit those earning up to 80% of median income) and the affordable stock currently in place in Bedford. Assuming that the new Chapter 40B comprehensive permit projects provide another 153 units in affordable housing, the town of Bedford will have to produce at least another 100 units during the number of years to meet its fair share of affordable housing. Population growth of at least 1.5% annually over the next decade will create the need for more affordable units as well. This is an ultimately feasible undertaking for the town to embark upon and significant progress has been made to set things in motion and accomplish this mission during the next ten years.

The following were identified as some guiding principles to assist in selecting project sites, determining the type of development, and identifying priorities including:

- Target development projects to Town-owned properties to take advantage of parcels that will have discounted or nominal acquisition costs.
- Target development projects to those areas of town most accessible to transportation, goods and services to minimize further traffic congestion.
- Make sure that development projects are designed to be harmonious to the surrounding community and recognize that there is no replacement for good design.
- Avoid targeting development projects to areas that are ecologically sensitive and will degrade nearby conservation land.
- Insure that development projects complement existing historic districts.
- For moderate sized projects, encourage development of housing which will be affordable to households at various income levels.
- Look for affordable housing opportunities that will minimize impacts on the built or natural environment such as the refinancing of existing housing or the creation of accessory apartments.
- Develop a number of low density, scattered site project alternatives in recognition of a range of housing needs in town including rental and homeownership options as well as housing for seniors and families.
- Look to areas of town that could accommodate higher housing densities such as industrial and commercial areas or primarily nonresidential areas.
- Seek opportunities to combine amenities with housing creation such as locating recreational, institutional and retail opportunities in close proximity to new housing when appropriate.
- Look for opportunities to obtain land or other resources for free or at below market values.

## **PROJECTS IN PROCESS and UNDER REVIEW**

The following is a description of the projects currently in progress. These projects demonstrate the town's continuing support and active development of affordable housing. Several projects, as noted, have received town funding with Community Preservation funds and town support through the Local Initiative Program. The Town has been a proactive supporter of affordable housing. Through the Bedford Housing Partnership and Bedford Housing Trust several projects are being developed: the Duplex Conversion Project, Condo Buy-Down Program, and 447 Concord Road. A chart follows the project descriptions, which summarizes the number of units, target population, financing, and time frame for completion.

### **Duplex Conversion Project – Affordable First-time Homeownership (Community Preservation Fund, Local Initiative Units Only)**

In the spring of 2000, the Housing Trust designated a Duplex Housing Task Force to coordinate the necessary arrangements to purchase and rehab two-family dwellings and convert them into affordable condominiums. The town provided Community Preservation Funds for the project and the Bedford Housing Trust was able to purchase its first duplex. The rehabilitation of these units is now nearly complete. The building is being converted into two affordable condominiums with deed restrictions to ensure long-term affordability. The units have received approval under DHCD's Local Initiative Units Only program. The Task Force envisions this project not only as a means to create more affordable housing in town, but also as a way of building community around the issue of helping others.

### **The Village at Concord Road (Local Initiative Program)**

The Brown family is developing a mixed rental and homeownership project on a six-acre wooded parcel owned by the family between Concord Road and the town-owned railroad bed, designated as a future bike trail. The project is being developed through the Local Initiative Program. Eight for-sale homes and twelve rental units will be located in six duplex townhouse structures on the fringes of the site. Two of the eight single-family homes and three of the twelve rental units will be set-aside as affordable, targeted to those earning up to 80% of median income. Additionally, the developer will market the units to those aged 55 or over, although there are no restrictions regarding the ages of others living in the units. This focus on a maturing population was in response to the preferences of abutters. The project is currently under construction.

### **North Road (Stephen Lane House) – (Local Initiative Program)**

A Local Initiative Program (LIP) application has been approved for a privately financed project consisting of eight condominium units. Two (25%) of the units will be affordable, priced to sell to families making below 80% of the area median income. The project will consist of three buildings, two containing three units, and one containing two units. The project calls for the renovation of two existing structures and new construction of a third building.

### **447 Concord Road – (Suburban Rental Pilot Program, Community Preservation Funds, state and local HOME, Mass Housing Partnership)**

Bedford is one of three communities chosen, through a competitive process, to participate in the Suburban Rental Pilot Program sponsored by the state Department of Housing and Community Development and Massachusetts Housing Partnership. This program guarantees financing will be available for the project through the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

The Bedford Housing Trust is managing the development of this Town owned property as rental family housing with a mix of low income, moderate income, and market rate units. On this 4.4 acre site approximately 10 detached and attached homes containing 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units will be constructed. It is expected that 2 acres will be developed as housing, 2 acres maintained as open space and recreation, and 0.4 acres preserved as wetlands.

Units will be targeted to families who qualify under a variety of income levels. Two units will qualify for Project Based Section 8 rental assistance. These units will be specifically marketed to families with gross income at or below 30% area median income and who qualify as formerly homeless or transitional. Four additional units will be targeted to families with gross incomes at or below 80% area median income with two of the units having a sensory impaired and/or handicapped set aside. The remaining four units will be targeted to families at 100% of the median income that qualify under the "Community Housing" definition of the Community Preservation Act.

The Town Meeting has approved the use of Community Preservation Act funds for predevelopment expenses and project financing. The Town Meeting also voted to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a long-term lease for the property. The Town will issue an RFP to select a developer/manager and execute a ground lease. Financing includes HOME funds, MHP Perm Plus, MHP permanent financing, and Community Preservation funds.

**Condo Buy-down Program – Affordable First-time Homebuyer**

Built in 1987, the Shawsheen Ridge project involved the development of 36 townhouse-style units for sale as condominiums as well as the preservation of seven acres of open space. The developer also proposed to set-aside six of these units as affordable, having this affordability managed in perpetuity through the Town of Bedford. Recent sales of the market units ranged from \$229,000 to \$245,000 for the two-bedroom units and more than \$400,000 for the three-bedroom units. The affordable units now sell for approximately \$140,000, currently within the means of someone earning approximately \$105,000 per year. This exceeds the state's income limits for a unit to count towards Bedford's affordable housing inventory. Through the Condo Buy Down Program units are purchased at the 'affordable' price and sold for less to households making no more than 80% of the area median income. The units then qualify as state recognized affordable housing. To date, one unit has been turned over to a qualified buyer.

**Patriot Place – (Community Preservation Funds, Local Initiative Program)**

Bruce Blake/Patriot Place, LLC has proposed the new construction of a 10-unit rental development on Springs Road near the center of Bedford. The project will be a single structure with all one-bedroom units. Half of the units would be affordable for the term of the loan from the Town and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership funds. Three (3) of the units would remain affordable in perpetuity. The rents on the market rate units are expected to be affordable to moderate income renters. The developer is receiving Community Preservation Act funds and to Massachusetts Housing Partnership fund. The Town and DHCD have both approved the *Local Initiative Program (LIP)* application for this project.

**Avalon at Great Meadows – (Comprehensive Permit)**

Avalon Bay has proposed a 139-unit project through the comprehensive permit process. The project's comprehensive permit was approved by the Bedford Zoning Board of Appeals. However, abutters objecting to the project have taken it to court. Therefore, this project is on hold until the court issues a decision.

**Princeton Properties**

Princeton Properties submitted a comprehensive permit application to the Town for the development of 258 units in eleven, three-story buildings on a site located off Concord Road. The proposed site consists of approximately 55 acres of which almost 17 are wetlands. The site was once a working farm that has been separated from Concord Road by a narrow trail the Town acquired from the Boston & Maine Railroad after train service was terminated almost a half century ago. The developer proposes to obtain access to the site over this Town-owned railroad bed. Town Counsel contends that the developers do not have the right of access, and the Town has filed a declaratory statement to this effect in State Land Court. The Zoning Board of Appeals, the sole permitting authority under the comprehensive permit process, heard the case on July 26, 2001, and it stated that the issue of right of access must be resolved before it can formally review the comprehensive permit application. In July 2003 the Land Court ruled in favor of the developer and the Town is appealing. As instructed by the Housing Appeals Committee, the ZBA has resumed review of the application.

<b>HOUSING PROJECT</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</b>	<b>TARGET COMPLETION DATE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF UNITS AND TYPE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF AFFORDABLE UNITS AND PERSONS/HOUSEHOLDS SERVED</b>	<b>UNITS COUNTED TOWARDS SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY</b>
Duplex Conversion Project	Community Preservation Funds, Sales, Private.	2004	2 homeownership	2 affordable for households below 80% of median income	2
Village at Concord Road	Private Financing.	2004	20 total: 8 homeownership 12 rental	2 affordable homeownership and 3 affordable rental units to households below 80% of median income. Units will be marketed to 55+	14
North Road/Stephen Lane House	Private Financing.	2005	8 homeownership	2 affordable for households below 80% of median income	2
447 Concord Road	Community Preservation Funds, MHP Perm Plus, MHP permanent financing, State and Consortium HOME	2005	10 rental	2 for formerly homeless or transitional at or below 30% of income; 4 for households below 80% of median (2 of these for sensory impaired or handicapped); 4 for households at 100% of median income	10
Condominium buy downs	Community Preservation Funds, Sale	2006	1 homeownership	1 affordable for a household below 80% of median income	1
Patriot Place	Community Preservation Fund, MHP, Private.	2006	10 rental	5 affordable to households below 80% of median 5 market rate to be affordable to moderate income renters.	10
Avalon Bay	Homeless Providers Development Subsidy, Veterans	2006	139 rental	35 affordable to households below 80% of median income	139



## **Section 3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY**

### **STRATEGY**

The Bedford Housing Partnership plans to achieve the objectives described in Section 2 through a five-pronged strategy:

- 1) Pursue low-density, scattered-site housing projects to meet our housing unit goals.
- 2) Educate the town on affordable housing needs, options, and plans.
- 3) Revise zoning bylaws to promote affordable housing.
- 4) Integrate all affordable housing projects into the historic and small-town character of the town, ensuring consistency with the neighborhood and with Smart Growth principles.
- 5) Employ multiple sources of funding, including CPA funding and state programs.

These five prongs are designed to be realistic, practical, and consistent with the Objectives articulated above. Based on this strategy, we have designed short and long term Action Plans for the Bedford Housing Partnership and the Town.

The Affordable Housing Strategy section outlines both the short and long term action plans focusing on development regulatory, and programmatic strategies. A property inventory is also included. In all cases, the town will pursue affordable housing developments, zoning changes, funding, etc., in a manner that both is in keeping with the town's character, and reflects partnership and dialog with the town's residents. Bedford has tremendous potential to be a model town for affordable housing, and this strategy can help the town get there.

### **SHORT TERM STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

#### **DEVELOPMENT**

All of the projects in progress were described in the previous section. Listed here under short term strategies are the projects being directly developed by the Town or the Housing Trust or projects in which the Housing Partnership has a proactive role.

**Develop 447 Concord Road.** The development of this town-owned parcel is well under way, with CPA funding approved in Spring 2003. However, substantial effort will be required to bring it to completion.

**Continue the Condo Buy-Down program.** This existing CPA-funded program buys down inexpensive condos to affordable levels. It has been successful and should be continued.

**Encourage Private Development of Affordable Housing Consistent with our Objectives and Strategy.** With limited subsidy funds, private developers must play a key role in creating suitable affordable housing in town. In addition to zoning changes, the Housing Partnership should establish contacts with developers who are experienced

with such development, encouraging them and assisting them in site selection, proposal development, and acquiring approvals.

**Explore Options for Converting Existing Houses to Affordable.** Several models have recently been proposed that help moderate-income homeowners stay in their homes while qualifying their homes as affordable. Generally, the homeowner gets a property tax reduction and/or other compensation in return for a deed restriction ensuring the perpetual affordability of their home. This is a potential model for Bedford, where many seniors are struggling with high property taxes. In addition, a similar arrangement could be looked into for accessory apartments.

**Continue Volunteer-Based Housing Development.** Volunteer-based housing development is a good way to create more housing while keeping costs low and getting townspeople involved. Building on our successful Duplex Conversion Project, we can move forward with another Duplex Conversion and/or start a Habitat for Humanity project.

### **Smart Growth**

The Town will be examining development in terms of Smart Growth. A grant from CHAPA was received by the owner of the Blake Block, the town's key commercial block. This grant will be used to pursue the redevelopment of this crucial block according to Smart Growth principles.

## **REGULATORY and PROGRAMMATIC**

Housing production is contingent not only on actual development projects but on the planning, regulatory, and programmatic tools that enable localities to improve decision-making, encourage appropriate development by others, and more strategically invest both public and private resources in housing creation. To most effectively and efficiently execute the development strategies included in this Plan, reliable information will be required to steer the course, greater flexibility will be needed in the Town's Zoning Bylaw, and new resources will be needed to as expeditiously as possible secure control over important development properties and move them forward to completion.

### **Participate in MetroWest HOME Program Consortium**

The Town of Bedford has become a member of the MetroWest HOME Consortium as of July 1, 2003. Bedford's HOME allocation is for the current fiscal year is \$21,809 including \$1574 for program administration. Bedford will only receive a small amount of funding thought its annual HOME allocation. We will work with the Consortium to seek alternative allocation methods in order to make additional funds available to Bedford and the other smaller communities in the Consortium for affordable housing projects.

### **Pursue passage of an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw.**

Several Massachusetts cities and towns have recently enacted zoning bylaws that require or provide an incentive for substantial new housing developments to include a minimum level of affordable housing. The Housing Partnership and the Planning Board should work together to pass such a bylaw so that we don't lose ground as new housing is built.

### **Initiate ongoing Affordable Housing education campaign**

In order to dispel myths and build support, the Housing Partnership will educate Bedford residents about the need for affordable housing in town, the options available, and the plans that are in place.

**Launch a Comprehensive Review of the Town's Zoning Bylaws.** The Planning Board and the Housing Partnership should work together to identify ways in which the zoning bylaws can be revised to promote and encourage development of affordable housing in town, consistent with the town's housing goals and objectives.

### **Continue to Capitalize the Housing Trust**

By securing working capital and subsidy funds, the town will have greater flexibility to pursue innovative affordable housing approaches, and to take advantage of opportunities as they emerge. Raising both private and public resources for affordable housing activities needs to remain a priority.

### **Participate in the State's Soft Second Loan Program**

To provide first-time homebuyers in Bedford with the affordable mortgage financing option of the state's Soft Second Loan Program, the Housing Partnership will hold discussions with banks and other lenders concerning their interest in processing mortgages in connection with the state's Soft Second Loan Program. An application will also be submitted to the state for participation in the program.

**Strengthen the Strategic Focus of the Housing Partnership.** With a growing number of initiatives, the Housing Partnership must operate at a strategic level, acting as a board overseeing subcommittees that do the actual work. It must develop skills in strategic management, in recognizing and taking advantage of opportunities, and in publicizing the town's affordable housing successes.

## **LONG TERM STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

Some of the items listed in the Short Term Strategies, such as capitalizing the Trust, will continue to be pursued along with these Long Term Strategies.

### **Development Strategies**

Property numbers refer to a description of the properties as listed in the Property Inventory following this section.

#### **Village at Springs Brook**

The Housing Partnership has been working with the Veterans Administration on a 1.2-acre site that currently includes a parking lot and fields. A consultant was hired to prepare a business plan that will describe the development of housing on this site, referred to as the Village at Springs Brook. Of the ten rental units under consideration for this development, at least four would be financed as affordable. Financing for the project may include a private construction loan and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership's permanent financing through its Permanent Plus Program.

A business plan has been submitted to the Veterans Administration. VA headquarters in Washington, D.C. must approve this plan before the VA can convey the property to the

Town of Bedford on a sole source basis. The VA is not allowed to sell its property but will provide a long-term lease at favorable terms. The project is on hold for an indefinite period until the VA approves the business plan.

### **Single room occupancy development proposed by New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans**

The New England Shelter for the Homeless wants to construct 60 units of housing with 100% of the units qualifying for McKinney Section 8 Single Room Occupancy Moderate Rehabilitation Program rental subsidies. The rehabilitation site is a portion of a 23,686 SF building located at the Edith Nourse Rogers VA Medical Center, Bedford, MA. The property will be leased from the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs for a term of 50 years.

### **Encourage Mixed-Use Development in Suitable Areas**

Several parts of town (such as the Blake Block) are well suited to medium-density mixed-use development aligned with Smart Growth principles. The Housing Partnership should work with the Planning Board, property owners, and others to create development and redevelopment plans for these areas.

### **Pursue Town-Owned Properties**

Very few of the remaining town-owned properties are suitable for affordable housing development. But we should pursue all reasonable opportunities in this area, since this is much cheaper than purchasing land.

### **Purchase Suitable Properties for Affordable Housing Development**

Now that CPA funds are available for this purpose, the Town should identify and acquire property suitable for affordable housing development using CPA funds.

### **Privately owned potential development sites that should be explored as alternatives to the sites described above include:**

#### **Property 2**

This property includes two contiguous sites, one with approximately 235,000 square feet and another small lot of 26,000 square feet without any development. The owners will be contacted to indicate the Town's interest in potentially purchasing the parcels with the intention of building housing. Depending upon the owners' response, an arrangement might be proposed to give the Town or Trust the right of first refusal when the owners decide to sell.

#### **Property 3**

This property includes an historic house, a large barn and open space that could potentially accommodate all three of the missions of the Community Preservation Fund to create greater opportunities for open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. Both the house and barn are deteriorating and would require substantial repairs. The property was recently taken off the market.

#### **Property 4**

This long parcel has more than 500,000 square feet and involves a little farm along the railroad bed, including an occupied house. There are some wetlands. A potential development configuration would be to subdivide the property to include the house and

wet area as one parcel, with the other portion of the site developed as affordable housing.

## **REGULATORY**

**Enact Recommendations from the Zoning Bylaw Review.** Once the Housing Partnership and the Planning Board have completed the review of our zoning bylaws from an affordable housing perspective, they must work to enact the recommended improvements

## **VERY LONG TERM STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

The following projects represent very long term possibilities:

### **Property 5**

This parcel of more than 130,000 square feet backs directly onto Elm Brook and includes considerable wetlands as well as an existing house. It is estimated that the site could accommodate up to 13 housing units depending upon the actual amount of wetland.

### **Depot Park**

Redevelopment along the town's commercial arteries and in commercial districts to include significant new housing production bears closer scrutiny. For example, a significant opportunity for Bedford is the development of Depot Park as a mixed-use revitalization area, combining new commercial enterprises as well as new residential opportunities to accommodate a wide range of incomes and lifestyles – from seniors who desire to live close to services; to young professionals interested in feeling more a part of a diverse village life in close proximity to amenities such as specialty stores, restaurants, perhaps a cinema or small theater, and bike paths; and to artists or other business owners who want live-work spaces that can combine work space with living quarters. This development can also grow into a significant destination place for cyclists using the town's bike paths. Such development can be accomplished through an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw that would allow residential use in this commercial district in sufficient densities to accomplish a village square vitality in support of the historic character of the area and the work that has been conducted by the Friends of Depot Park.

### **Property 6**

This project involves a multi-family rental housing development, which could use upgrading and would be a natural addition to the town's affordable housing inventory. There may be some potential for refinancing the project to make necessary improvements and establish long-term affordability of the 44 units, adding the property to the town's affordable housing inventory towards meeting the state 10% standard.

### **Property 7**

Mixed-income Senior Residential Development with the possible inclusion of a mix of starter homes for young families with mixed uses including a senior center, small commercial/convenience stores and recreational space/athletic fields and open space. This property includes two parcels with almost 3 million square feet or more than 67

acres of flat and primarily dry land close to Hanscom Air Base. This is a very beautiful site with fields and a wooded periphery. At today's prices, it is extremely doubtful that the Town can afford to purchase the entire parcel even with the Community Preservation Fund. However, a partnership between the Town/Housing Trust and the owners or a new developer may be a feasible approach to development. This is an interesting development opportunity in Bedford.

Other potential development sites that should be explored as alternatives to the sites described above include:

### **70 Pine Hill Road**

The Town purchased this property several years ago and placed a 15-year development restriction on it. When this restriction expires, the Town should strongly consider conveying it for the purposes of affordable housing.

### **Property 8**

This is a 660,000 square foot property that includes some level and dry land that would be conducive to housing development.

### **Redevelopment of Industrial Zones**

The redevelopment of mixed-use areas should be strongly encouraged. For example, the Industrial Mixed-Use zoning amendment provides the opportunity for residential development in industrial areas to rebuild these areas into mixed retail, office and residential communities. Many of the current industrial/office buildings are aging, and executives may be considering alternative locations. Also, most of these buildings are "clean" as they have been offices as opposed to manufacturing operations that create potential environmental issues. Many of the current workers in these businesses commute significant distances, and it would be advantageous for local businesses to look into how they can house their workers in closer proximity. These industrial areas are parts of Bedford where higher density housing would be less controversial, and many residents would likely be supportive of redevelopment initiatives that include affordable housing.

### **Other Properties**

The Housing Trust's Land Evaluation Committee identified a number of potential sites, including Properties 9 and 10 described below in the property inventory, that may have some long-term potential for affordable housing development. The Trust should at some point within the next few years contact the owners of these properties and express its interest in exploring the possible future development of affordable housing. The Trust should then keep in contact with these owners and monitor their interest periodically.

## **REGULATORY**

### **Protect the Long-term Affordability of Expiring Use Projects**

To monitor the status of the Bedford Village project and to intervene if necessary to maintain the long-term affordability and habitability of almost 100 units of housing. Ongoing staff or volunteer time of Housing Partnership members to monitor the status of the Bedford Village project is needed to insure that the owner is not planning to prepay the mortgage and terminate the rental agreement that maintains affordability. In such a case, further Town resources as well as other sources of financing may be required to

refinance the project to protect affordability and make necessary improvements. Additionally, prior to the expiration of the rental agreement in 2018, an agreement needs to be negotiated with the current owner to either sell the project to another entity, either nonprofit or for profit, which will be willing to purchase and improve the project with insurances of long-term affordability or to refinance the project and voluntarily maintain the affordable component. Town resources, in addition to other state and federal funds, will likely be required if the current developer decides to prepay the existing mortgage or when the current rental agreement expires in 2018 to protect long-term affordability.

## **PROPERTY INVENTORY**

There have been several efforts to identify properties appropriate for housing development over the last several decades. The 1986 Bedford Housing Plan listed possible affordable housing sites. Specific development proposals were also offered for four of the sites, three of which have been subsequently developed as market rate housing including Otis Street/Highland Avenue, Davis Road/Notre Dame Road/Laurie Lane/Karen Drive, and Selfridge Road. Another site, Great Road/Springs Road/Fletcher Road is now being developed as part of the Blake Block.

In 1989 the Bedford Housing Authority hired a consultant, the Mount Vernon Group, to prepare a Housing Site Inventory. This project involved an assessment of publicly and privately owned sites for potential development by the Housing Authority. Through a process of elimination, 34 properties were identified that appeared to have the greatest potential for state-sponsored housing. Ultimately 20 properties were analyzed and classified according to the following characteristics – utilities available, zoning, wetland impact, street frontage/access, general topographic character, neighborhood characteristics, ownership and a preliminary visual inspection. There is some overlap between this list and past and future lists of potential affordable housing development sites.

In the mid-1990's the Housing Partnership undertook a cursory review of potential sites, reviewing the status of a number of potential parcels. Also, the Comprehensive Plan proposed that the Town purchase a large parcel of land that is privately owned with a Ch. 61 agricultural restriction, located near the Gutierrez parcel to be developed through the Chapter 40B comprehensive permit process.

In 2001, a committee of the Housing Trust evaluated a wide range of potential affordable housing development sites. Starting with a list of developed and undeveloped sites from the Town Assessor's Office, involving 400 to 500 parcels, the committee began to hone-in on parcels that were owned by the Town or privately owned but had at least 100,000 square feet, arriving at approximately 178 parcels. These sites were further assessed as to whether they were buildable in consideration of wetlands or other environmental or physical problems. Finally the committee listed almost 80 properties and ranked them in the order of how promising they were for potential affordable housing development.

In 2002 and 2003, the Housing Trust has investigated the top sites on this list: contacting owners, investigating deed restrictions and site conditions, etc. Based on the information thus acquired, the list has been updated to remove properties where affordable housing development is no longer considered feasible or which have since been developed. A few new properties have been added that were missed during the original analysis.

In addition to providing parcel numbers, locations, ownership, and square footage, these sites are coded in the following manner:

- *P1* – Most promising sites,
- *O* – With open space possibilities,
- *P2* – Promising sites with some problems/somewhat promising,
- *L* – Promising, but more long-term due to ownership, current use, etc.

To begin to focus on actual sites for development, *the* Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan proposed priorities regarding the site selection process. In addition to a focus on Town-owned property, another significant caveat to this priority system – an extremely important consideration with respect to affordable housing development – is the site's proximity to transportation and services, thus focusing development close to the major transportation and commercial corridors and mitigating some of the effects of additional traffic congestion associated with any new development.

**Priority One:** When searching for the most feasible sites for affordable housing development, priority consideration should be given to Town-owned property. Because property values have skyrocketed, the subsidy associated with free land is increasingly important to making units affordable. This is particularly true for the more affluent suburban communities, like Bedford, which are encountering greater challenges in securing state and federal subsidy funds to promote unit affordability than other communities with higher concentrations of poverty and poorer housing conditions. The contribution of municipal property for affordable housing development is viewed extremely favorably by government agencies in making funding decisions, the land contribution considered as a major local commitment to project financing. Town-owned parcels for serious consideration include:

- *447 Concord Road* – This parcel, with 191,664 square feet, is the town-owned parcel most suited for affordable housing development in the short term. It has adequate access to Concord Road, sloping down to an upland area and an area of wetlands. In 2002, predevelopment work was funded by Bedford CPA funds and MHP funds. The April 2003 Annual Town Meeting approved additional CPA funds for actual development (to be combined with state and federal monies) and authorized the Selectmen to enter into a long-term lease with a developer.
- *131 Shawsheen Road* – This is a large parcel that was a former sand and gravel pit. While there have been discussions of the needs for cemetery expansion land and watershed protection, a portion of the site would be ideal for housing.
- *70 Pine Hill Road* – The Town purchased this property several years ago and placed a 15-year development restriction on it. When this restriction expires, the Town should strongly consider conveying at least a portion of it for the purposes of affordable housing.

It is important to recognize that Town-owned land is extremely limited and each of the sites listed above includes a range of special issues that make development problematic whether it be the amount of wetlands, development restrictions, competing plans for development, other existing uses on site, archeological significance, access problems, and other geographic challenges. It is likely that any of these sites will take a concerted amount of time and attention to resolve difficult technical obstacles and attract necessary



community support before they can be made available, if at all, for new housing development.

### **Priority Two**

Those properties identified as most promising by the Housing Trust (coded P1) but not owned by the Town of Bedford are listed below.

- *Property 1 (Village at Springs Brook)* – Currently a parking lot and field owned by the Veterans Administration, this 1.2-acre parcel is being planned for mixed-income rental housing with financing from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership Fund.
- *Property 2* – This property involves two contiguous parcels of undeveloped uplands, one with approximately 235,000 square feet and of the other with 26,000. The Housing Trust has contacted the owners, who have indicated they are not interested in developing these parcels at this time. However, the Trust will maintain an ongoing dialog about this possibility. The Trust may propose an arrangement to give the Trust the right of first refusal when the owners decide to sell.
- *Property 3* – This privately owned property (approximately 3 acres) includes a house with enough open space to accommodate some affordable housing.
- *Property 4* – This parcel has more than 500,000 square feet, including an occupied house and a small farm. There are some wetlands. A potential development configuration would be to subdivide the property to include the house and wet area as one parcel, with the other portion of the site developed as affordable housing. The Housing Trust has contacted the owner, but received no response.
- *Property 5* – This parcel (more than 130,000 square feet) backs directly onto Elm Brook and does include considerable wetlands as well as an existing house. It is estimated that the site could accommodate up to 13 housing units depending upon the actual amount of wetland.
- *Property 6* – The site includes a multi-family market rate rental housing development, which could use upgrading. There may be some potential for refinancing the project to make necessary improvements and establish long-term affordability of the 44 units, adding the property to the town's affordable housing inventory towards meeting the state 10% standard.
- *Property 7* – This property includes two parcels, offering almost 3 million square feet, or more than 67 acres, of flat and primarily dry land close to Hanscom Air Base. This is a very beautiful site with fields and a wooded periphery. At today's prices, it is extremely doubtful that the Town can afford to purchase the entire parcel even with the Community Preservation Fund. However, a partnership between the Town/Housing Trust and the existing owners or a new developer is perhaps the most feasible approach to development. The owners are actively pursuing development of this parcel and negotiations with the town are ongoing. This is perhaps the most valuable short-term development opportunity in Bedford, and the Town should be proactive in ensuring that any development meets local needs.
- *Property 8* – This is a 660,000 square foot property that includes some level and dry land that would be conducive to housing development. It is adjacent to the town-owned land at 70 Pine Hill Road, mentioned above.
- *Property 9 (East Village Project)* – This property is on Great Road between Loomis Street and Lane Avenue. It's a small, dry wooded lot with a central location, eminently suitable for affordable housing development. Various development options have been discussed over the years. The Housing Trust should work with private

developers or on its own to see that this property is successfully converted into affordable housing.

- *Property 10* – This five-acre property includes a house and small farm. It is high and dry and suitable for housing development. The Housing Trust should contact the owner to see if they are interested in development at this time or if, at least, a right of first refusal might be arranged.

### **Priority Three**

The redevelopment of mixed-use areas should be strongly encouraged. The Industrial Mixed-Use zoning bylaw recently approved provides the opportunity for residential development in industrial areas, in fact the option of rebuilding these areas into mixed retail, office and residential communities. Additionally, redevelopment along the town's commercial arteries to include significant new housing production, bears close scrutiny. Another significant opportunity for Bedford is the development of Depot Park as a mixed-use revitalization area, combining new commercial enterprises as well as new residential opportunities to accommodate a wide range of incomes and lifestyles – from seniors who desire to live close to services; to young professionals interested in feeling more a part of a diverse village life in close proximity to amenities such as specialty stores, restaurants, perhaps a cinema or small theater, and bike paths; and to artists or other business owners who want live-work spaces that can combine work space with living quarters. This development can also grow into a significant destination place for cyclists using the town's bike paths. Such development can be accomplished through an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw that would allow residential use in this commercial district in sufficient densities to accomplish a village square vitality in support of the historic character of the area and the efforts of the Friends of Bedford Depot Park. In addition to existing Town-owned property, additional property can be acquired for the redevelopment project through private acquisition and, if necessary, eminent domain.

### **Priority Four**

The property inventory prepared by the Housing Trust has been matched up to the areas of interest identified by the Conservation Commission to coordinate the interests of conservation and affordable housing development to the greatest extent possible. There are some overlaps between the areas of interest with the potential of working together to build housing and maintain open space for several of the Priority 2 properties listed above including Properties 4, 7, 8 and 10. This joint interest should be recognized in developing these properties.

### **Priority Five**

The Housing Trust's Land Evaluation Committee identified a number of potential sites that may have some long-term potential for affordable housing development (coded P2 or L on their list). The Trust has begun to contact the owners of these properties and express its interest in exploring the possible future development of affordable housing. The Trust will then keep in contact with these owners and monitor their interest periodically.

There are also other potential affordable housing sites that have been suggested by local leaders and deserve further investigation. For example, the former Raytheon Naval Weapons and Industrial Reserve Plant might have property conducive to new housing development. While the top of the hill is industrial, the lower left side of the Navy's property could potentially be used as affordable housing, next to the existing trailer park. Some even mention the prospects of obtaining site control over this trailer

park, eventually to be maintained as part of the affordable housing inventory. Many suggest that the Town look to mimicking private development, purchasing very small under-maintained homes on larger parcels, tearing down the existing house, and redeveloping the property to include affordable housing. Because there are several local owners who possess considerable amounts of undeveloped land, there have been many recommendations to try to work out deals with these owners, over and above what is currently in process. Certainly the potential of converting multi-family housing into affordable condominiums should be explored.

## **Section 4 USE RESTRICTIONS**

The affordable housing projects in Bedford require that affordability be maintained through deed restrictions. Deed restrictions for rental projects require long-term affordability, usually in perpetuity. The deed restriction for homeownership projects also require long term affordability, usually in perpetuity, and also include resale provisions, which ensure that units will remain affordable to the targeted income group and be resold to households within the eligible income limits.