



# Concord Housing Foundation, Inc.

*Working to Preserve Concord's Housing Diversity*

July 14, 2023

Michael Busby  
40B Planning and Programs Specialist  
Mass Housing  
One Beacon St., 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston MA 02108

**40B Application of NOVO Riverside Commons Project  
300 Baker Ave.  
Concord MA**

Dear Mr. Busby

The Concord Housing Foundation would like to indicate its general support for a Section 40B project at this location. A number of our members attended the developer's presentation at the site. We are glad to see a project which will provide at least 20% affordable units, and agree that this site, already part of an office park, is one that will have relatively little negative impact on the historic buildings or character of the Town of Concord. However, we think there are a number of questions that need to be dealt with as planning for this project proceeds.

1. The project appears to take up all the available space. It has family sized units, including affordable units, which is good. The site is bounded by the railroad and adjoins a large office park, with no existing play area for children. A somewhat smaller project allowing room for a play area would satisfy this concern.
2. The project has the potential for excellent access to West Concord and the MBTA station there. However, pedestrian access across the Assabet River is essential and does not now exist. We believe the developer should build or contribute to the construction of this vital link. We think the owner, who also owns buildings in the office park, will also benefit because such a link makes it easier for workers to commute by public transportation, thus expanding the pool of workers who could take jobs at Baker Avenue.

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3. The developer's plans to preserve the green space around the bordering pond are appreciated. In particular, we were impressed by the apparent commitment to retain the large trees near the pond, and build a path along the shore of the pond. This feature should be retained in any changes in the design.
4. The project will obviously require sewerage. There is no room for on-site treatment. While this is a matter between the Town, the Department of Public Works and the developer, we hope the State will permit increased discharges from the Town sewage treatment plant and that the developer will contribute to any necessary connections and expanded treatment capacity.
5. Rental housing is at a premium in Concord. The project should be built with legally enforceable conditions that all of the units will remain rentals and not converted to condominiums.
6. The design of the buildings seems rather pedestrian. Concord deserves better, and we hope the developer can offer a revised design that has more character and is in keeping with the rest of the Town.
7. We welcome that developer's statement that the new buildings will comply with Concord's green energy building codes. Even if the Town does not become a site of a pilot for "fossil free new construction," we hope that the project will not use fossil fuels. In addition, we would like to see solar panels included in the roof and any parking canopies.
8. Traffic will obviously be an issue. This can be somewhat relieved by the bridge across the Assabet discussed above. The developer should estimate the increased traffic burden on Baker Ave and contribute to any changes necessary to ease traffic flow and minimize pedestrian risk at the Main Street/Baker Avenue intersection.

While these concerns should be addressed effectively, we continue to welcome the addition of rental units, with 20%-25% affordable, at this site.

Frank Feeley  
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Cc: Select Board, Town of Concord  
Linda Miller, Chair, Concord Planning Board  
Theo Kindermans, Chair, Concord Zoning Board of Appeals  
Kerry LaFleur, Town Manager  
Megan Zamutto, Deputy Town Manager  
Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner

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