

27.5 & 29 Clarks Road, Amesbury

Responses to comments from Planning Board, Public, Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED), Fire Department and Conservation Agent

November 14, 2025

Submitted by Eagles Crossing LLC,

Inclusions:

- Revised L1.1 Landscape Materials Plan revised November 14, 2025 by Halvorson Tighe & Bond
- Revised L1.2 Representative Plant List revised November 14, 2025 by Halvorson Tighe & Bond
- Floor Plans, November 13, 2025, by HDS Architecture
- Perspective Views of Multi-Unit Residential Building, November 13, 2025 by HDS Architecture (views from 31 and 27 Clarks Road)
- Perspective View Along Clarks Road Alternate, November 13, 2025 by HDS Architecture (showing added dormers to 3 family building)
- Precedent Images fencing
- Narrative Responses below

Comments

Planning Board

1. Planning Board Comment (also OCED comment): *Driveway with median and wider space between buildings*

Response: The suggested driveway entrance layout with split entrance and island provided by OCED has been reviewed by the project team and has been deemed not favorable for the applicant to modify from the current design due to the following impacts:

- Reduces the desired screening the two front historic style buildings provide of the larger scale multifamily building
- Places the front buildings closer to the side lot lines. This reduces the setback to the abutting dwellings on each side and
 - Reduces space for the trailhead kiosk and bike parking planned for the entrance to the public walking trail
 - Reduces usable open space outside amenities building
 - Reduces space for screening between proposed buildings and abutting properties
- Results in the loss of at least one parking space
- Reduces the maneuverability for the fire apparatus/emergency vehicles to enter the site.
- Creates a larger curb cut along Clarks Road.

2. Planning Board Comment : *Multifamily roof at center section suggest multiple dormers*

Response: As noted at the meeting, this was part of the original design intent but after review, and deliberation and consultation with city staff, ultimately rejected when it was agreed that the simple roof improved and simplified the aesthetics. See earlier design below.



3. Planning Board Comment : *Provide public parking for walking trail*

Response: While a publicly available walking path has always been a part of this proposal, and the developer is committed to providing that amenity for our residents and neighbors, we have maintained this development is intended first and foremost to create much-needed housing for Amesbury. Creating parking for the walking path would remove needed parking for residents of this new development.

4. Planning Board Comment: *Concrete sidewalks to Starbucks.*

MCG Response: The existing sidewalk from the project site to the Starbucks is proposed to be replaced in kind and to City sidewalk construction standards.

5. Planning Board Comment : *consider defining the 1st floor walk out units with a colonnade (front porch?)*

Response: As we designed the building to have the central green as the primary focus for the walk-out units, we feel adding columns would detract from that focus while increasing the visual size of the building.

6. Planning Board Comment : *front buildings appear better without extensions and with dormers. Consider shutters and two chimneys each*

Response:

- Extensions: We worked to reduce the depth of these buildings to maximize their engagement with the street, minimize views to parking beyond, and allow for increased green space and parking. The historically appropriate extensions help achieve those goals, while providing two units on the first floor and a three bedroom unit on the second floor, in each building.
- Dormers: We've worked to design these buildings to thoughtfully and practically represent the New England charm that is consistent with Amesbury's heritage. The attic level will not be occupiable, and adding faux dormers to one of these buildings works against the functional ideals that define traditional New England architecture. They also serve to increase the apparent bulk and height of the building from the street perspective. In our design process we have experimented with and without dormers on the buildings, ultimately preferring them without, for the above reasons. An alternate view with dormers is below.
- Shutters and chimneys: The design team also went through many iterations of chimneys and shutters, striving to design buildings that were heavily inspired by the local character, specifically the character of some of the homes nearby along Main Street. The result is two buildings that are not intended to be replicas but instead are designed with the highest respect for the existing historic homes in the area. To that

end we remain cautious about the extent to which we add architectural elements that serve no functional purpose.



7. **Planning Board Comment** : *show visitor parking, loading areas and bike parking areas*

Response: Visitor parking is provided adjacent to the leasing office near the front of the site. Final decision on location and number to be determined with building management at a later date. Loading areas are provided at both entrances to the building and shown on the civil plans. Bike parking will be provided at the trailhead for the public, and at least 21 bike parking spots will be located on-site and in the garage for residents. Final locations to be determined.

8. **Planning Board Comment** : *will first floor units adjacent to the circle at the back portion of the multifamily building have direct access to outside*

Response: It is not anticipated that these units will have direct access.

9. **Planning Board Comment** : *define 1st floor direct access and roof structure above*

Response: Each entryway to these direct-access units will have a small roof directly above, a short walkway to that door, and a small semi-private outdoor area. See close-up below.



Public Comments

1. **Public- John Stevenson comment :** *concerned with additional developments proposed to feed into Clarks/Elm/Macy Street intersection. Questions accuracy of projected traffic numbers from Clarks Road proposed development*

Response: Traffic engineers have followed standard procedures and their information is being peer reviewed

2. **Public – John O’Keefe comment:** *difficult turning right out of Clarks Road onto Route 110 and turning left back into it*

Response: Traffic engineers tell the city and development team that the planned improvements to this intersection will improve traffic movement, and that these improvements would not likely receive the funding nor priority if development were not proposed for the area.

3. **Public - Traci Chalifour Comment:** *Where are the mechanical units to be located?*

Response: The mechanical units will be located on the roof where, due to the pitch of the roof surrounding the flat area for the mechanicals, it is not anticipated they will be visible from the ground. See Floor Plans, November 13, 2025, by HDS Architecture.

4. **Public - Traci Chalifour Comment:** *Aesthetics near the garage entry, and desirability of units near that entry*

Response: The walls on either side of the garage ramp will be finished in a brick or stone look rather than bare concrete, to coordinate with the building design. Units adjacent to the garage entry are anticipated to suffer minimal to no impact from that entry, due to:

- The units will not be in direct line of sight of vehicle headlights, due to screening fencing and downgrade of ramp. See Revised L1.1 Landscape Materials Plan revised November 14, 2025 by Halvorson Tighe & Bond
- windows and insulation limiting exterior noise
- No units located directly above garage door
- quality commercial garage door openers operate smoothly and quietly
- concrete deck and insulation between garage and residential units

5. **Public - Traci Chalifour Comment:** *Trash handling space is inadequate.*

MCG Response: Trash and recycling operations have been discussed with a hauling contractor and sized appropriately. Additionally, the applicant has existing comparable operations with similarly sized trash and recycling areas that have been proven to be adequately sized.

6. **Public - Traci Chalifour Comment:** *Please provide perspectives mentioned at July meeting of views adjacent to 27 and 31 Clarks Road*

Response: see Perspective Views of Multi-Unit Residential Building, November 13, 2025 by HDS Architecture (views from 31 and 27 Clarks Road)

7. **Public - Traci Chalifour Comment:** *Height of building*

Response The 3 unit buildings will be approximately 34' tall and the multifamily building will be approximately 52' tall, as defined by Amesbury ordinances.

8. **Public - Traci Chalifour Comment:** *Water and sewer services.*

MCG Response: Water and sewer services are shown on the site plans. Additionally, MCG is coordinating with the DPW about the details of the service connections for inclusion in building permit plans.

9. Public - Traci Chalifour Comment: *maintenance of trails*

Response: The city has suggested the developer commit to five years of trail maintenance, which the applicant accepts.

10. Public - Traci Chalifour Comment: *Ownership of conserved land while using acreage for density*

Response: According to city staff, a non-buildable parcel will be created for the open space, the restriction for which is tied to the approval. We are open to what works best for the city in terms of the final owner of the parcel.

11. Public - Traci Chalifour Comment: *public parking for trail*

Response: see above answer to PB comment #3

12. Public - Traci Chalifour Comment: *Fire department concerns about ladder access and fire suppression*

Response: see below answer to FD comments

Office of Community & Economic Development marked-up site plan

1. OCED (also Planning Board) *Driveway with median and wider space between buildings/ with additional trees*

Response: see response to Planning Board Comment #1

2. OCED: *red oak "street" tree- preserve and protect in place*

Response: Note- this tree is located on private property, not city property. The team consulted with a local arborist and tree service company and unfortunately, given its proximity to the foundation of the proposed 3-unit building (in the proposed design and the OCED proposed redesign), it is highly unlikely that retaining this tree through construction and having it survive afterwards would be possible. New trees will be planted which will complement the overall landscaping and buildings.

3. OCED: *shift ornamental trees (at Clarks Rd) to positions that flank sidewalk access to/from residential structure*

Response: Trees flanking the residential structures is the design intent, as shown on the plans.

4. OCED: *determine fence locations and proposed type around site*

Response: See updated Revised L1.1 Landscape Materials Plan revised November 14, 2025 by Halvorson Tighe & Bond

5. OCED: *provide a 6' wide path*

Response: Based on other paths designed and researched by the landscape architecture team, other paths in Amesbury, and Amesbury's sidewalk guidelines, we have determined a 5' path is most appropriate

6. **OCED:** *provide split rail fence between trail and building and between trail and Birchwood Point property*

Response: The landscaping in the area of the trail between building and property line has been and will be thoughtfully designed to balance screening as required by the EESGOD guidelines, adequate definition of separation between public space (trail) and the building, as well as aesthetics. At this point we do not feel a split-rail fence would improve the above items, and would reduce space available for screening plantings and aesthetic plantings, reducing the appeal for path users and residents alike.

7. **OCED:** *at raised island- widen flush/mountable pavers*

Response: Agreed. A wider paver area would improve the look of this island. Approximately 20' of pavement will be retained; the remainder to be pavers and landscaping.

8. **OCED:** *provide privacy fence between property and 31 Clarks Road*

Response Provided, running from property line to behind the trash enclosure. See Revised L1.1 Landscape Materials Plan revised November 14, 2025 by Halvorson Tighe & Bond

9. **OCED:** *provide details of lighting and fencing at dog park*

Response See Precedent Images Fencing sheet for fencing and see photometric plan for lighting cutsheets

10. **OCED:** *Further review from OCED after next submittal that is expected to include:*

- *quantities in plant schedule*
- *coordination of lighting design with tree canopy*
- *updated specification of plant species on planting plan*
- *enlargement plans and details of site amenity areas and features*

Response: While OCED's interest in and input towards our design has been a driver in improving the project in many areas, we look forward to submitting specific plant quantities and more exact locations of site amenity features with our eventual building permit submission. The lighting design shown on the photometric plan takes into account the existing and proposed tree canopy and plant species will be compliant with conservation commission comments and best practices. See Revised L1.2 Representative Plant List revised November 14, 2025 by Halvorson Tighe & Bond.

Office of Community & Economic Development comment on perspectives

1. **OCED:** *suggest large format stone at base of building similar to Boston Way development*

Response: We considered stone along the base of the building, which was part of our initial design concept, but given the final design arrived at after extensive consultation with city staff, we're proposing brick along the base in a warm gray/beige color with pre-cast sill elements. The stone look suggested is, we feel, more appropriate in an urban setting where it covers a significant portion of the building as opposed to our design, where the modular brick creates a stronger relationship to the human scale, better suited to the scale of this development and its relationship to the site.

Fire Department

1. **FD Comment:** *Code Compliance & Inspections - The project must fully comply with 527 CMR 1.00 throughout the construction and operational phases. All required inspections, including but not limited to fire suppression systems, alarm systems, and life safety equipment, are the responsibility of the builder/developer and must be scheduled in coordination with the fire department. Additional permits for fire safety and suppression systems are required.*

MCG Response: The project will fully comply to 527 CMR 1.00 throughout construction and operational phases. The project is currently in the permitting phase and will be further developed prior to building permit submittal at a later time and coordinated with the Fire Department.

2. **FD Comment:** *Fire Department Access Concerns - A major concern is access for emergency apparatus, particularly the aerial ladder.*

- *The common area in front of the 146-unit building currently prevents aerial ladder access to approximately two-thirds of the building.*
- *This access issue poses a significant safety risk for occupants and first responders in the event of a fire.*

Proposed Mitigation:

- *Removal or relocation of trees or landscaping obstructing access*
- *Reconfiguration of the common area to allow sufficient clearance for aerial ladder operations*
- *Verification of access during final site plan review and prior to occupancy*

The Fire Department considers these modifications essential for the safety of residents and personnel..

MCG Response: MCG has met with the Fire Chief to discuss the areas of concerns noted. The plans have been coordinated and will be revised to address all noted items, including but not limited to modifications to the landscaping. See Revised L1.1 Landscape Materials Plan revised November 14, 2025 by Halvorson Tighe & Bond

3. **FD Comment:** *Site Safety During Construction - Given the size and scope of this project, a huge concern moving forward is site safety during construction. While I know elements of safety will be included in the Construction Management and Mitigation Plan (CMMP), I will need to review a complete Health and Safety Plan prior to the start of construction.*

This plan should address:

- *Emergency access and egress during all construction phases*
- *Worker safety protocols*
- *Fire prevention measures and hot work controls*
- *Site security*
- *Communication protocols for emergency incidents*

MCG Response: A CMMP will be prepared and submitted prior to construction.

4. **FD Comment:** *Garage Concerns - While not specific to the site plan, when the review of building construction and permitting occurs, I would like clarification on the type and extent of fire suppression systems proposed for the garage located beneath the residential units. Per 527 CMR 1.00 (Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code) and 780 CMR (Massachusetts State Building Code), all enclosed parking structures located beneath occupied spaces are required to be protected by an automatic sprinkler system and appropriate fire detection and ventilation systems. Is there a plan for any other special suppression system?*

Additionally, please provide details on fire department access into and within the garage,

including entry points, clearances, and emergency egress routes for responders operating below-grade.

MCG Response: MCG has discussed the fire detection/suppression and ventilation system with the Fire Chief and additional information will be provided during the building permit submittal. All systems will be designed in full compliance with the building and fire code.

Conservation Agent

1. **Conservation Agent Comment:** *Stockpile Location and Controls: Sheet C-3 notes that stockpiles will be kept at the tops of slopes. Stockpiles must be located outside of the 100-foot buffer zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and shall be surrounded by appropriate erosion control measures to prevent sedimentation impacts.*

MCG Response: The proposed stockpiling location is outside of the 100' buffer and shown on sheet C-6. A typical detail showing a "Temporary Soil Stockpile" with erosion controls is shown on sheet C-11.

2. **Conservation Agent Comment:** *Peer Review and Environmental Monitoring: It is highly likely that the Commission will require both an independent peer review and the presence of an environmental monitor for this project due to the scope of proposed work within regulated areas.*

MCG Response: No response warranted.

3. **Conservation Agent Comment:** *Mitigation and Invasive Species Management: Please clarify whether a mitigation or restoration plan has been developed for the site, particularly for areas of disturbance within the buffer zones. Additionally, confirm whether an invasive species management plan will be implemented during and after construction.*

MCG Response: A mitigation and invasive species management plan will be prepared and discussed with the Conservation Commission during the Notice of Intent filing process.

4. **Conservation Agent Comment:** *Trail Mulch Material: Portions of the mulched trail are proposed within buffer zones to BVW. The Agent requests that no chemically stained or dyed mulch products be used in these areas to prevent potential contamination.*

MCG Response: The trail material will be stone dust and natural mulch material. No dyed mulch products will be used.

5. **Conservation Agent Comment:** *Stormwater Basin Design: A proposed stormwater basin is shown within the 50-foot buffer zone. Please specify the type of basin being proposed (e.g., retention, detention, bioretention rain garden, etc.) and provide details on how it will be designed to minimize impacts to adjacent resource areas.*

MCG Response: Details for the infiltration basin (i.e. retention basin) are shown on sheet C-16, including the proposed seed mix within the basin footprint.

6. **Conservation Agent Comment:** *Trash and Recycling Area: Plans indicate a proposed a trash/recycling area (1) within the 100-foot buffer zone. Ensure that all receptacles in this location are designed to be securely covered to prevent debris from migrating into adjacent resource areas.*

MCG Response: The trash and recycling area proposed within the 100' of the BVW is located at the dog run. The receptacles will be securely covered.

7. **Conservation Agent Comment:** *Proposed Plantings: Please confirm that all proposed plantings consist of native, non-invasive species appropriate for the site's ecological conditions.*

MCG Response: All plantings within the buffer zone will be native, non-invasive plantings. Additional plant information will be provided in the Notice of Intent application.

Respectfully submitted by Eagles Crossing, LLC, by its Project Manager

Alexander Loth