

# Orleans' Housing Story, May 2023

## The History:

For over twenty years Orleans has pursued a plan weaving together open space acquisitions, sewer implementation and zoning adjustments to allow for both preservation of our natural resources and development of housing and commercial activities in our downtown.

## The Need:

Most of us are aware there is a housing crisis in Orleans and beyond. Increasingly, we are seeing how it affects, not just those struggling with finding a secure place to live, but also those of us who may find our favorite restaurant closed on an evening, can't get a timely medical appointment, or wonder when the plumber will come to fix a leak. And we hear the Town struggles to hire and retain employees, including police and fire personnel.

We know most of our housing stock is single-family homes, that year-round rentals are almost impossible to find, and there are few, if any, options for older folks wishing to downsize and stay in town. Increasingly, we see individuals and families who earn too much to qualify for Affordable Housing (the Missing Middle) also priced out of the housing market.

## The Process:

The Select Board oversees the creation of housing policies and guides housing solutions. The Affordable Housing Committee identifies specific needs, creates strategies, and engages the public. The Affordable Housing Trust Board raises and manages funds, evaluates potential project viability, and oversees their implementation. Trust funds are used to purchase property, pay for project pre-development, and generally work to bring outside investment for Affordable Housing to Orleans. Each project requires a complex, multi-step process usually taking five years or more, as in the diagram of basic steps below:

Identify Property	Pre-development Analysis	Request for Proposal	Choose Developer	Disposition Agreement	Local Permitting	Arrange Financing	Construction	Qualify Residents	Lottery/ Move in
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## The accomplishments, so far:

Development	# units	Status	Completion
Rental Unit, Old Colony Way	1 < 80% AMI*	Occupied	
Habitat Ownership Home	1 < 60% AMI	Occupied	
Cape Cod 5/Pennrose	52 <60% AMI, 10 between 80% & 110% AMI	Arranging Financing	2025-2026
107 Main Street	14 < 80% AMI	Arranging Financing	2025-2026
Governor Prence	Recommended by Study Committee: up to 77 units; AMI mix TBD	Town Meeting Vote to Convey will allow for RFP to be issued.	2027-2028

\*AMI stands for Average Median Income of Barnstable County

[See other side for May 2023 Warrant Articles to keep the process moving forward.](#)

## Warrant Articles for May 2023 Town Meeting

### Articles to Fund Affordable Housing Trust Fund:

#### Warrant Article #15: Community Preservation \$500,000 for Affordable Housing

Voters' support of the Community Preservation Committee's recommendation for funds for Affordable Housing has been the primary source of funding for the Trust to date.

#### Warrant Article #31: \$275,000 for Affordable Housing

In 2018 Orleans was the first Cape town to pass this override, which has been supported annually since.

#### Warrant Article #32: \$225,000 for Affordable Housing

The impact of the above \$275,000 override has decreased over time due to inflation and rising costs. Adding \$225,000 would bring this allotment to \$500,000, which the Trust recommends be included in the annual budget going forward.

### Article to Convey 5.5-acre Governor Prence site:

#### Warrant Article #56: Conveyance

This is simply a step that must occur to allow the Town to proceed to re-develop the Governor Prence site. It allows the Town to issue an RFP, choose a developer and proceed to advance housing as recommended by the Governor Prence Study Committee and approved by the Select Board.

### Articles to Expand Duties of Affordable Housing Trust Board:

#### Warrant Article #60: Expand duties of Affordable Housing Trust Board

This Warrant Article would allow the Trust to explore programs and new public and private funding sources to address the needs of individuals and families earning too much to qualify for Affordable Housing, yet who cannot afford to enter the housing market – either for purchase or rent. The goal here is to allow the Trust to look at a wide range of housing needs and investigate how to create mixed-income housing opportunities.

#### Warrant Article #62: Support State Legislation

This is a resolution to support Bill S861 that Senator Julian Cyr submitted, and Representative Sarah Peake supports, to allow Massachusetts Towns to permit their Housing Trusts to negotiate voluntary deed restrictions on housing without AMI limitations. That means Orleans could explore creating a separate deed restriction program limiting occupancy to those who reside and work year-round in Orleans, to support working individuals and families with incomes in the "missing middle" range.

### Zoning Articles:

#### Warrant Article #63: Reduce lot sizes in Business Districts

This zoning change would allow for the development of 1- or 2-family dwellings on the 69 parcels in our business districts that have at least 20,000 sq. ft. and are not now in residential use.

#### Warrant Article #64: Accessory dwellings on panhandle lots

This zoning change would allow an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) to be created on a panhandle lot. There are approximately 200-300 such lots in Orleans.