



TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (RFI)

26-17 For the rehabilitation, Conversion and/or redevelopment of the former Coffin School

located at

1 Turner Road
Marblehead, MA 01945

Questions Deadline: October 23, 2025, at Noon

Response Deadline: **October 30, 2025, at Noon**

Proposal Submittals to: Allison Jenkins
Chief Procurement Officer
Mary Alley Building
7 Widger Road,
Marblehead, MA 01945
jenkinsa@marbleheadma.gov

RFI RESPONSE
COFFIN SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT
1 Turner Road, Marblehead, MA 01945
October 30, 2025





October 28, 2025

Allison Jenkins
Chief Procurement Officer
Mary Alley Building
7 Widger Road
Marblehead, MA 01945

Dear Ms. Jenkins,

We are pleased to submit our response to the town's request for information, and to share some initial ideas for the redevelopment of the Coffin School.

Harborlight Homes, a local non-profit housing developer, is very interested in creating new housing opportunities while preserving the historic school building and maintaining a scale which fits into the neighborhood. We have a track record of working collaboratively with many North Shore communities to build and manage affordable homes that reflect an understanding of each location's particular needs.

Primary respondent:

Harborlight Homes
600 Cummings Center, Suite 270-X
Beverly, MA 01915

Contacts:

Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director
978-473-7158, adefranza@harborlighthomes.org

Andrew Leonard, Director of Real Estate Development
978-473-7523, aleonard@harborlighthomes.org

Kristin Carlson, Senior Project & Design Manager
978-473-7156, kcarlson@harborlighthomes.org

Thank you for the opportunity to present our ideas, and we look forward to future conversation and supporting the town of Marblehead in its housing goals.

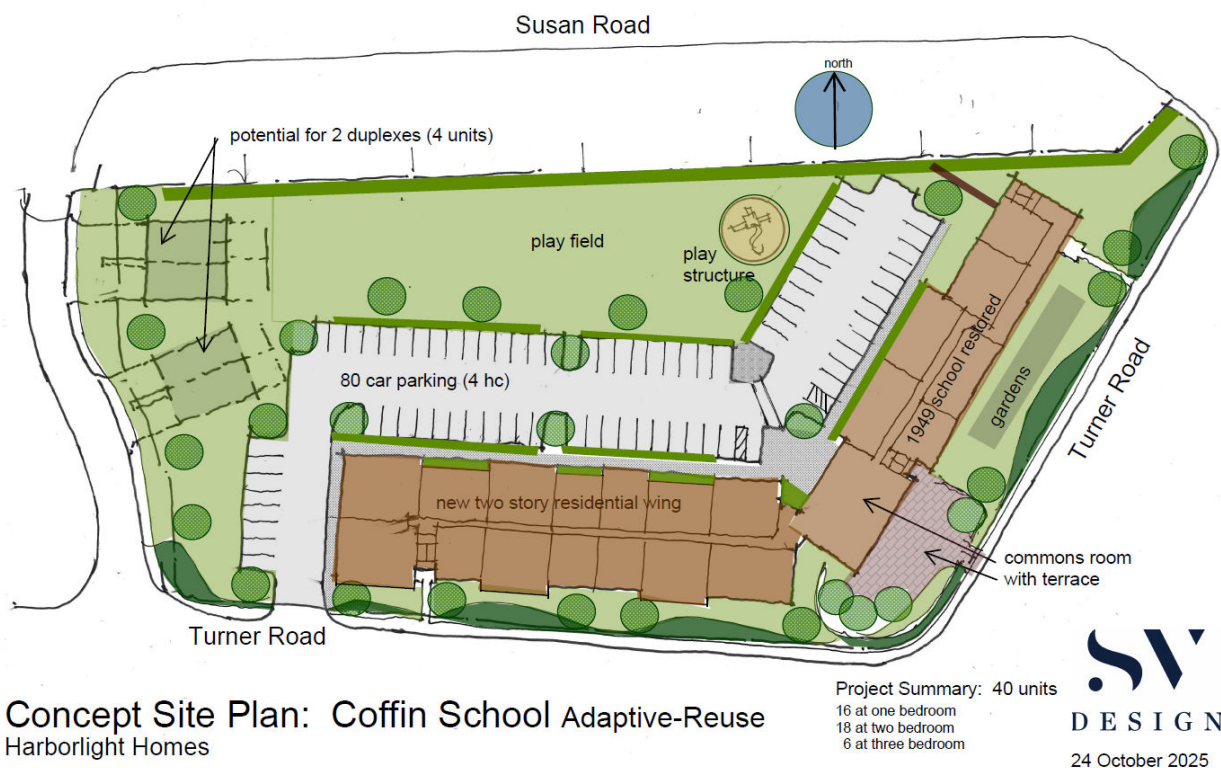
Sincerely,

Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director

BASIS OF INTEREST

For this RFI, we are presenting a re-use of the Coffin school for community housing, with 40 units consisting one one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartment homes. In this scenario, the historic 1948 school would remain and be fully renovated to historic standards. The existing annex would be demolished and a new two-story wing built.

The full site would be used for this proposal and include parking (2 spaces/unit per zoning code), raised-bed gardens, and play area/open space for residents. Alternatively, a portion of the site could remain as a town-owned park. In addition to the 40 rental units, we could also potentially build four first time homebuyer townhouses (shown dashed on the site plan below) *if* funding to support creation of ownership housing becomes available.



The existing SR (single family residential) **zoning** does not allow for multi-family housing. Our goal would be to comply with existing zoning as much as possible (height, setbacks, parking, etc), and seek relief only on use, to allow multi-family development. The town could consider 40R zoning (“Smart Growth” zoning, which has the benefit of state-funded incentive payments for re-zoning and also for creating units), 3A “MBTA” zoning, or a special permit process. The town could also work with the developer in a friendly 40B permit process. We are open to whichever zoning mechanism is best for the town.

Our proposal blends with the **character of the neighborhood**, respecting the scale of existing homes by not exceeding the 35’ height limitation and by maintaining or increasing setbacks. Working with

our architects at SV Design, we will incorporate residential detailing and sloped roofs on the new construction wing. (SV Design has several single-family residential projects in Marblehead, and has a great understanding of the community). The historic brick school building has been part of the neighborhood for generations and will remain and be restored to serve the town for years to come. This proposal also retains a great deal of open space, which could be used as a town park for the whole neighborhood, including gardening and play areas.

We include here some images of SV Design and Harborlight projects to provide ideas of what the new wing could look like:



McKay School, Beverly (SV Design)



Granite Street Crossing, Rockport (Harborlight & SV Design)



Maple Woods, Wenham (Harborlight & SV Design)

Multiple aspects of this project would contribute to **sustainability goals**, and we would welcome collaboration with Sustainable Marblehead. Starting with the re-use of an existing building, we could also use high-efficiency electric heat pumps for heating and cooling, provide EV charging stations, and install new, historically accurate, high-performing windows. We would include solar PV panels on the roof and use drought-tolerant landscaping to limit or exclude irrigation. Harborlight recently completed its first LEED Gold building (Maple Woods, Wenham) and is about to break ground on our first Passive House project (Asbury Common, Hamilton).

As noted in the RFI, Marblehead's 2020 Housing Production Plan pointed to the town's need for **lower-cost options for working-age young adults and seniors**. We hear daily from seniors, families, and individuals who are in need of an affordable place to call home. This project would provide a mix of affordability levels, for a mix of household types. The project would not have an age restriction but would be designed with seniors in mind, with many one-bed units (14 units) and universal design to support seniors aging in place.

One of the town's redevelopment goals is to create affordable homes that can be included in the state's **Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)**. Marblehead is currently at 3.85% of its housing stock classified as affordable under this index. The addition of 40 new affordable units would bring Marblehead up to 4.2% on the SHI.

Finally, we know that the town is looking for a partner and a **project which can be maintained and cared for for years to come**. Harborlight Homes develops, owns and manages its projects for the long-term, creating relationships with towns and neighbors. We do all our property management and maintenance in-house so that we can deliver a high standard of service to our residents. We would also staff this project with a Harborlight Resident Service Coordinator, who would assist and support residents in accessing needed services (healthcare, food, transportation, etc) and partner with local organizations to bring activities and services to the residents (classes, holiday programs, social activities, clinics, etc). Harborlight owns and maintains its properties for the long-term, and a part of that is supporting all our residents, from essential workers to families to seniors.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

We are proposing here a **fee-simple purchase** of the property from the town. Harborlight could acquire the site once permitting is complete. At acquisition, Harborlight would be responsible for any operating, maintenance or security costs of the property. Alternately, we could consider a 99-year lease of the property from the town.

This project would require substantial **capital improvements**. Construction costs would include demolition of the annex building, abatement of any hazardous materials and environmental costs, complete historic renovation of the re-used 1948 building, a new wing, and fit-out of 40 housing units and common spaces. All mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems would be new. There are also capital costs for site work, including storm drainage, parking, other site improvements, and landscaping.

In addition to acquisition and capital costs are general development costs such as insurance, architecture and engineering, and legal, overhead and fees, and capitalized reserves required by the lenders. The **total development cost** for the project is estimated to be between \$28-32 million.

We have identified the following **potential funding sources**:

- Federal and State Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
- Federal and State Historic Tax Credits
- State EOHLC housing programs
- Local funding (HOME, Marblehead Affordable Housing Trust Fund)
- Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing program
- Solar tax credits
- Conventional mortgage debt

We could include an additional four affordable townhouse homebuyer units if funding sources to support them became available.

Ongoing operations and maintenance would be self-sufficient and funded by operations (rents) and would not require additional capital from the town. In addition, there would be operating and replacement reserves established with the project, to further ensure consistent operations.

Harborlight properties all pay municipal **property taxes**. The project would result in a tax benefit to the town in the range of \$50,000 to \$70,000 annually.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Harborlight Homes (legal name: Harborlight Community Partners, Inc.) is a local, non-profit, Massachusetts-certified Community Development Corporation. Based in Beverly, we build, manage, and maintain affordable homes for families, seniors, and young adults across the North Shore. Our portfolio includes over 700 units in eleven communities, with more than 300 homes in our development pipeline.

Recent projects include:

Anchor Point 1 and 2, Beverly: 77 units of family affordable housing with playgrounds and a community center.

Maple Woods, Wenham: 45 units age 62+ affordable housing adjacent to conservation land. LEED Gold certified.

Granite Street Crossing, Rockport: 23 units of family and senior affordable housing within a residential neighborhood.

Catalyst Housing, Lynn: Historic renovation with 24 units for homeless young adults. Partnership with the Haven Project.

Briscoe Middle School, Beverly: Historic school renovation with 91 units of age 55+ affordable housing. Partnership with Beacon Communities.

Permitted and funded upcoming projects include:

Asbury Common, Hamilton: 45 new construction, non-age restricted affordable housing. Although a 40B project, designed within residential height limits and setbacks. This will be Harborlight's first Passive House certified project.

Windward Crossing, Rowley: 20 senior affordable housing units, 5-bedroom group home, private condos and a community center. Partnership with the Cusack family.

Our **Real Estate Development team** consists of:

- Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director
- Andrew Leonard, Director of Real Estate Development
- Kristin Carlson, Senior Project & Design Manager
- Pat Connolly, Project Manager
- Brandon Bennett Gualpa, Associate Project Manager
- Raquel Castro, Project Coordinator

SV Design has been and continues to be a core partner of Harborlight Homes and is responsible for the attractive and sustainable buildings we build. Not only is SV Design the Architect of the above projects, but they have a long track record of similar projects.

TENANCY

Harborlight would seek site control of the entire property for housing development. However, we could leave some of the site with the town for a public park or gardens. We are also open to creative ideas and incorporating uses that would be compatible with housing, serve the community, and create additional economic development.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Key barriers to redevelopment:
 - The first hurdle will be zoning. As described above, there are multiple options the town and developer could consider. Zoning is best approached collaboratively.
 - Traffic concerns and access for Fire Department
 - Potential hazardous materials and environmental issues
- Additional information that would be needed from the town for a fully developed RFP:
 - Environmental study & hazardous materials assessment
 - Existing conditions plan
 - Floor plans of existing buildings
- Additional ideas for the town to consider:
 - Continue to specify preference for affordability in RFP, to add to SHI.
 - Include any desired additional uses in RFP (park or open space or specific tenant type, for example).
 - Would be helpful to understand more about how the town wants to approach zoning.
 - Look for a partner with a track record who will be there long-term.



HARBORLIGHT HOMES current homes portfolio

Existing Harborlight Homes



Firehouse Place

4 units
individual supportive homes
Hamilton



Boston Street Crossing

2 buildings
26 units
individual supportive homes
Salem



Catalyst Housing

24 units
individual supportive homes
Lynn

Harborlight Homes' properties offer wrap-around services for families to achieve economic mobility, seniors can age in place safely and well, and those who have experienced homelessness maintain independence and stability.

- Enrichment Programs
- Supportive and Personal Care Services
- Case Management
- Financial Coaching
- Resources for Food Assistance
- Connection to Community Resources and Educational Programming
- High quality on-site Property Management and Maintenance with high level of responsiveness to resident needs



To Apply for Housing:

harborlighthomes.org/application-form

Questions:

applications@harborlighthomes.org



Visit Us



harborlighthomes.org



BUILDING STABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY
**HARBORLIGHT
HOMES**



homes for families & individuals



Individual Family Homes

7 buildings, 17 units
family homes
Beverly



Sewall Building

4 units
family homes
Marblehead



Hardy Street

6 units
family homes
Beverly



Granite Street Crossing

6 units
family homes
Rockport



Anchor Point 1 & 2

2 buildings
38 units/39 units
family homes
Beverly



Agawam Village

14 units
family homes
Ipswich

Managed by Ipswich Housing Authority



homes for seniors



Turtle Creek/Woods

2 buildings
109 units/67 units
senior homes
Beverly



Pigeon Cove Ledges

30 units
senior homes
Rockport



Rockport High School

31 units
senior homes
Rockport



Whipple Riverview Place

10 units
senior homes
Ipswich



Granite Street Crossing

17 units
senior homes
Rockport



Maple Woods

45 units
senior homes
Wenham



BVLA (Beverly Village for Living & the Arts)

85 units
senior homes
Beverly
Managed by Beacon Communities



Agawam Village

80 units
senior homes
Ipswich

Managed by Ipswich Housing Authority



supportive homes for seniors



Harborlight House

30 units
supportive senior homes
Beverly



Janet M. Leuci Building

20 units
supportive senior homes
Saugus

See Homes in the Pipeline





Cathy Hoog, Executive Director

Allison Jenkins,
Chief Procurement Officer
Mary Alley Building
7 Widger Road
Marblehead, MA 01945

October 29, 2025

Dear Ms. Jenkins,

Please accept this Letter of Interest as a response to the RFI issued for the rehabilitation, conversion and/or redevelopment of the former Coffin School at 1 Turner Road in Marblehead.

The Marblehead Housing Authority (MHA) Board of Commissioners would like to formally express an interest in the property. The Marblehead Housing Authority is the primary respondent of this RFI, the main office address is 26 Rowland Street, Marblehead, MA 01945 and the direct contact individual is Cathy Hoog, Executive Director.

The basis of interest in this property is the MHA's mission to continually maintain, improve and create affordable housing in the community of Marblehead. Though the MHA is not currently in position to purchase this property, MHA is in position to provide a viable partnership with any Developer candidate that may submit a formal proposal for the property once a formal RFP is issued.

The vision MHA has for a partnership with a Developer would primarily entail creating more affordable housing units for the community. Specifically, MHA could be involved in a number of capacities including but not limited to:

1. A co-owner partnership with the developer to increase opportunity for any local State funding available to housing authorities in Massachusetts.
2. A partnership that entails a Management Agreement to manage any future property on the site. The Housing Authority is a respected and experienced manager of rental properties in the community and a high performer as evidenced by scoring in Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) reviews.
3. A partnership that entails waitlist advertising, tenant selection and tenant certification for any affordable units on the future site. The MHA is an experienced expert in tenant certification for affordable housing as well as waitlist management and presently manages statewide waitlists for MHA units that total thousands of applicants.
4. A partnership that includes resident services for any future resident population on the newly developed site. MHA is currently operating and overseeing various support service programs for seniors, individuals with disabilities and families including: on site supportive living programs through a partnership with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, all-inclusive social service coordination through on site staff funded through a partnership with EOHLC and an Economic mobility program for families in the MHA portfolio through MHA support staff funded through an additional partnership with EOHLC. As a

dedicated and experienced provider of resident services with a proven track record for successful programs and grant writing, MHA is an ideal candidate for a future partnership in a newly developed senior and/or family housing community in Marblehead.

The Marblehead Housing Authority sees this site as an incredible opportunity for the Town to increase affordable housing in the community and raise the number of affordable units in Marblehead.

MHA is asking for consideration to incorporate additional scoring points criteria for including MHA as a partner in the evaluations for future proposal submissions. The local connection, local commitment, specific experience and mission of the Marblehead Housing Authority make the agency a viable candidate for a partnership with any future developer firm chosen.

MHA can serve as a catalyst to advance town wide development, we support housing philosophy that expands options in the community, and we certainly understand how to seek viable, sustainable and creative solutions for low-income people in need in our community.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any additional questions, we look forward to discussing our strong interest in future possibilities for this property.

Sincerely,



The Marblehead Housing Authority Board of Commissioners
Cathy Hoog, Executive Director





TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD

CEMETERY DEPARTMENT



WATERSIDE CEMETERY

SUPERINTENDENT

Catherine M. Kobialka

294 West Shore Drive

Marblehead, MA 01945

PHONE: (781) 631-1182

FAX: (781) 639-3423

ccemetery@marblehead.org

April 8, 2025

Town of Marblehead
Select Board
188 Washington Street
Marblehead, MA 01945

Dear Select Board,

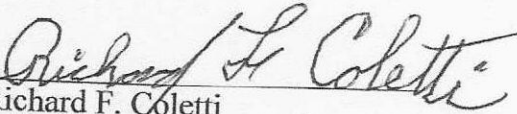
This letter is regarding Article 31 in this year's Town Warrant.

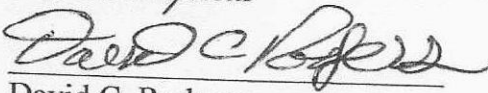
For the past 12 years this Department has made the Town Administration aware of the need for land for future burial space. Both John McGinn and Thatcher are aware of this Department's interest in the Coffin School property.

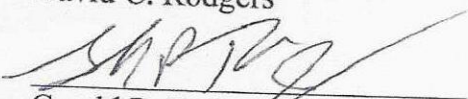
We ask that you please consider this request in any future plans regarding this property. The property's close proximity to Waterside Cemetery makes it an ideal candidate for future burial space.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,


Richard F. Coletti


David C. Rodgers


Gerald P. Tucker