

# *Information Packet*

## Lodge at Ames Pond

### An Affordable Housing Lottery Tewksbury MA

This packet contains specific information on the affordable housing program and application process for the affordable rental units being offered at the Lodge at Ames Pond in Tewksbury, MA.

Tewksbury Lodge Limited Partnership and the Town of Tewksbury invite you to read this information and submit an application if you think that you meet all eligibility requirements.

**Applicants must apply for a lease through the Leasing Office first. Once found eligible for a Lease, Applicants will then complete the Affordable Housing Application that this Information Packet addresses.**

Please hold on to this packet until you have leased a unit as it will be a useful guide throughout the entire process.

#### *Lodge at Ames Pond*

*Developed by Lodge at Ames Pond Limited Partnership*

*For Affordable Unit Information call (617) 782-6900*

*Information Packet created by SEB*



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# GENERAL OVERVIEW AND RENTS

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**Lodge at Ames Pond** is a 364 unit apartment community located on Ames Pond Drive in Tewksbury, MA. 91 of these apartments will be rented to households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income.

For a **description of the units and the development** please read page 12.

The unit mix of the affordable units is as follows:

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# of Units	# of Bedrooms	# of Bathrooms	Approximate Size	Rent*	Estimated Monthly Utilities
46	1	1	731-936 sq. ft.	\$1,048*	\$112
35	2	1-2	1,063-1,177 sq. ft.	\$1,245*	\$148
10	3	2	1,041 sq. ft.	\$1,433*	\$176

\* **RENTS DO NOT CHANGE BASED ON INCOME.** The rents are set annually using a calculation that determines the “affordable” rent, which is based on the Area Median Incomes for the Lowell MSA. They are therefore subject to increase or decrease based on changes in Area Median Income and utility allowances. As briefly explained as possible, “affordable” rents are essentially rents that are “affordable” to a household that makes 70% of the Area Median Income and pays 30% of this income towards rent and utilities.

**This is not subsidized housing. Unless a tenant *already* has a rental subsidy (like a Section 8 voucher), they are responsible for paying the full amount of rent each month.**

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**Q: How long will the designated apartments remain affordable?**

A: Rents may increase a few percentage points if Lowell Area Median Income increases or the costs of utilities decreases. Likewise, if the Lowell Area Median Income decreases and the costs of utilities increase, **rents will decrease.**

Please see **YEARLY ELIGIBILITY REVIEW** on pg. 11 for information on Income Limits for tenants who are renewing leases.

The Lodge at Ames Pond does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and handicap (disability). Disabled persons are entitled to request a reasonable accommodation of rules, policies, practices, or services, or to request a reasonable modification of the housing, when such accommodations or modifications are necessary to afford the disabled person equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing.

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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**Q: Who is eligible to apply for the affordable units in Lodge at Ames Pond?**

**A:** In order to qualify for an affordable unit, households must meet each of the three following criteria:

- 1.) Households must have income and assets that qualify within the parameters as highlighted in this section.
- 2.) Households must also be between 1 and 6 persons, but priority is given based on household composition. For questions on household size and composition, please read "**Household Size and Composition**".
- 3.) Households cannot own a home upon move-in. All homes must be sold before leasing a unit.

Additionally, some of the units will be disabled-accessible (DA). All households may apply for the DA units but households in need of an accessible unit will get top priority. For questions on priority by need of a DA unit, please read "**Disabled-Accessible Unit Information**" on page 9.

**Q: Can I apply if I currently own a home or am losing a home through foreclosure or divorce?**

**A:** You may put down a deposit but the Lottery Agent cannot deem you Program eligible until the home is no longer in your name. Therefore, the home must be sold or your name must be removed from the deed prior to your move-in date. If you are going through a divorce, your divorce decree or separation papers must state that you will no longer be on the deed or mortgage of the home. If your house is going through foreclosure, you must prove that it will be foreclosed on prior to your move-in date. All this must be documented for the Lottery Agent prior to them issuing your letter of eligibility.

**Q: Are there disabled-accessible units?**

**A:** Yes, some of the units will be disabled-accessible. All households may apply for the disabled-accessible units but households in need of an accessible unit will get top priority. For questions on priority by need of a disabled accessible unit, please read **Disabled-Accessible Unit Information on the bottom of pg. 9.**

**Q: What are the income eligibility requirements?**

**A:** To be eligible to lease an affordable unit, annual household income must be within a particular range, set by maximum and minimum income levels as follows:

## Maximum Income

To be eligible to apply to lease an affordable unit, the combined annual income for all income sources of all income-earning members in the household must be at or below eighty percent of median income for Lowell PMSA. **All sources of income are counted.** This includes, but is not limited to, Social Security, alimony, child support, overtime pay, bonuses, unemployment, severance pay, part-time employment, matured bonds, and monies received in court settlements. **It will be assumed that all applicants will continue to receive any monies they have received over the past 12 months unless supporting documentation proves otherwise.** Additionally, 2% of the value of total household assets will be added to a household's income (*see Allowable Assets below*).

Household Size	Maximum Income Limit
1	\$ 44,800
2	\$ 51,200
3	\$ 57,600
4	\$ 64,000
5	\$ 69,100
6	\$ 74,250

## Minimum Income

The Leasing Office will determine if an applicant has enough monthly income to cover the rent using the same methodology for applicants applying to their market rate units. Applicants who have receive a housing subsidy (like Section 8) are not subject to the minimum income requirements but, like all other applicants, will also have to pass reviews on credit scores, tenant history etc.

Leasing Offices will use the same criteria for the affordable units as they use on the market rate units which is usually that applicants monthly income must be 2.5 times the monthly rent.

## Allowable Assets

There is no asset limit for applying households for this development. However, 2% of assets will be imputed as income. Household Assets are calculated at the time of application. Assets may include cash, cash in savings and checking accounts, net cash value of stocks, **net cash value of retirement accounts** (such as 401k), real property, bonds, and capital investments. *If any household member currently owns property (to be sold for eligibility for this lottery), the total amount of retained equity after the sale of their current home shall be added to their total value of assets.*

*Example: A household has \$10,000 in savings, \$20,000 in a retirement account (\$13,000 net cash value) and a home assessed at \$300,000 on which they currently have \$280,000 remaining on the mortgage (\$20,000 in equity).*

*Their assets total is: \$10,000 + \$13,000 + \$20,000 = \$43,000*

*Imputed Income is: 2% of \$43,000 = \$860*

**Q: How is a household's income determined?**

A: The Lottery Agent will **project a household's income over the next 12 months** based on their current income and assets. In an effort to provide as accurate an income estimation as possible, the Lottery Agent will also review historical income data to provide a basis for future income estimates.

ALL SOURCES OF INCOME ARE COUNTED. Any monies you anticipate receiving in the next 12 months will be counted as income and monies received over the previous 6 months will be analyzed to help estimate future income. This includes, but is not limited to, Social Security, alimony, child support, overtime pay, bonuses, unemployment, severance pay, part-time employment, matured bonds, monies to be received in court settlements and imputed interest and dividends on bank accounts and other assets.

As an example, if a household applies for this lottery on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the total anticipated amount of money received by all members of the household from September 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 thru September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 will be counted as income. There are some exceptions that will not be counted, most notably income from employment of children under the age of 18 years.

If a household claims that certain income will stop in the near future, all claims must be supported with documentation. It is also not up to the household to determine what monies received over the past year should and should not be counted as their calculated income. Therefore, all monies should be listed on the application and the inclusion of these monies in determining a household's eligibility will be based on affordable housing guidelines.

**Q: I cannot withdraw money from my 401k or retirement fund, do I have to include it when I list my assets?**

A: Yes. You need to include the *net cash value* of all your current retirement funds. We realize that most retirement funds assess large penalties for early withdrawal but this does not technically mean that you "cannot" withdraw your funds. The post-penalty amount is what you need to provide along with supporting documentation.

**Q: If I cannot qualify for a Lease based on my own income or credit history, can I have a co-signer on my Lease?**

A: No. Only people who will live in the unit can sign the lease. Applying households must be able to meet the income qualifications on their own. If someone outside the household is going to help pay the rent, the amount to be paid must be listed as "Periodic Payments" on the Income Table in the Program Application. These payments will be counted towards the applying household's income.

## Household Size

**Q: How is appropriate household size determined?**

A: According to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development guidelines:

Within an applicant pool first (priority) shall be given to households requiring the total number of bedrooms in the unit based on the following **criteria**:

- a. There is at least one occupant and no more than two occupants per bedroom.
- b. A husband and wife, or those in a similar living arrangement, shall be required to share a bedroom. Other household members may share but shall not be required to share a bedroom.
- c. A person described in the first sentence of (b) shall not be required to share a bedroom if a consequence of sharing would be a severe adverse impact on his or her mental or physical health and the lottery agent receives reliable medical documentation as to such impact of sharing.

Household size shall not exceed state sanitary code requirements for occupancy of a unit.

**Q: Can a one person household or a married couple (or those in a similar living arrangement) lease a two-bedroom unit?**

A: Yes but only when there are no larger households on the waiting list. By Department of Housing and Development definitions, a one person household or married couple (or those in a similar living arrangement) leasing a two bedroom unit, is not a "household of appropriate size". Therefore, "inappropriately" sized households must understand that if and when an "appropriately" sized household applies for a 2BR unit and all 2BR units are currently leased, then the applicant will have to move into an affordable one-bedroom if one is available at the end of the initial lease term.

**Q: If I am currently going through a divorce/separation or planning on being divorced / separated soon, can I still apply?**

A: For non-homeowners, you will need to provide proof that the separation or divorce process has begun or has already been finalized. The **Program Application** will guide you through the documentation you will need to provide. If you have only begun considering a divorce or separation, and no legal action has been taken, you cannot apply as a single head-of-household and your application will be reviewed as if your current spouse will be moving into the affordable unit with you. **For homeowners going through a divorce**, the home must be sold or the divorce must be finalized (as you must be off the deed) before you move-in.

# APPLICATION PROCESS

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**Q: What are the steps in leasing an affordable unit?**

***Step 1: Fill out a Lease Application at the Leasing Office.***

If there is a waiting list for units, the leasing office may request that you fill out a *Lease Application* to get on their waiting list. Once a unit is available, the Leasing Office will review a household's *Lease Application* using different criteria than the Lottery Agent uses in reviewing a household's *Program Application*. At the Leasing Office, criteria such as credit scores, references, and current employment income will be reviewed. If a household is found to be eligible for a lease, they must choose a unit and put down a holding deposit. The holding deposit is one months rent. They may then fill out the Affordable Housing Program Application.

***Step 2: Fill out the Affordable Housing Program Application in entirety and submit the Program Application with ALL required documentation to the Lottery Agent.***

The Program Application will then be reviewed by the Lottery Agent for program eligibility. Only when all documentation is received will their application be reviewed and processed.

***Step 3: Notification of Affordable Housing Program Approval***

If the applicant is found eligible for an affordable apartment according to program guidelines, they will be notified by phone and/or by mail. The applicant will then need to go to the Leasing Office, fill out a **Lease Agreement and an Affordable Lease Addendum**, and move into their affordable unit within 90 days.

**Q: How is the Affordable Housing Program Application different from a Lease Application?**

**A:** The Affordable Housing Program Application is used to determine if applicants make more than the maximum income allowed to be eligible for an affordable apartment according to state and program guidelines.

The Lease Application is used to determine if applicants have ENOUGH INCOME to *afford* the affordable rent and have enough income remaining for other costs of living. The Lease Application uses criteria including employment history, credit score or reports, former lease history etc.

**Q: What happens if I don't submit all necessary documentation or fail to correctly complete my Affordable Housing Program Application?**

A: Households that submit incomplete documentation will be will be mailed a notice detailing the additional documentation that is needed to make their application complete. If the household submits all additional documentation their application will be processed in the order the application was completed. If a household fails to submit all required documentation, their application will remain in an "Incomplete Application Pool" and will only begin being processed once all requested materials have been received.

**Q: What information is required when an application is submitted?**

A: For an application to be considered complete it must be filled out in entirety, signed and dated. **In addition, all required income documentation and if applicable, disability documentation, must be submitted.** If any documentation is missing the application will not be processed but a notice will be sent stating what documentation is missing. If you following the application closely, it should guide you through everything you need to include.

## ***DISABLED-ACCESSIBLE UNIT INFORMATION***

**Q: Who qualifies for a disabled-accessible unit?**

A: According to *Mass Access: The Accessible Housing Registry*, "units that are barrier-free are accessible to people with disabilities that are wheelchair users, but could also be used by people of different types of disabilities. For example, a person of very short stature, a person with a brain injury or stroke, severe cardiac or respiratory problems, or a person with limited standing, walking, or reaching ability, may use the design features of a wheelchair accessible unit." Verification of need of an accessible apartment must be provided in the form of a doctor's note or equivalent if applicant is selected to rent one of the affordable apartments.

# APPLICATION TIMELINE

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**Q: What is the schedule for applications and the selection of renters for the affordable apartments at The Lodge at Ames Pond?**

**A:** This process can be as short as 2 weeks or longer than 2 months. To ensure the fastest approval possible, carefully complete all sections of the Program Application and send in copies of everything required. Below is an approximation of the time needed for each step:

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**Step 1:** The applicant completes a Lease Application at The Lodge at Ames Pond Leasing Office. All applicants that are found to be lease eligible (based on the review of credit scores, references, adequate income) must put down a holding deposit. The holding deposit is one months rent (or possibly more depending on credit scores and other factors). They can then fill out an Affordable Housing Program Application.

**Step 2: +2 weeks:** The applicant fills out the Affordable Housing Program Application and gathers all required documentation listed on the checklist and sends it to the Lottery Agent. Applications and *copies* of all income and asset documentation should be mailed to the address below.

**SEB**

**Re: Lodge at Ames Pond  
165 Chestnut Hill Ave, Unit 2  
Brighton, MA 02135**

**+0-2 weeks:** Based on information in the application, the Lottery Agent requests that the applicant mail in additional documentation that was missing from their application. *(This step happens with approximately 90% of all applications. If you want to expedite the time it takes to process your application, send in ALL documentation up-front. Do not wait for the Lottery Agent or Monitoring Agent to request a piece of documentation you probably knew was missing).*

**+1 week:** The Lottery Agent processes the completed application. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, this process is over. If they are deemed eligible, the Lottery Agent contacts the applicant and notifies them that they may now proceed to the Leasing Office to fill out a Lease Agreement.

**Step 3: 0-90 days:** Applicants must move into their affordable unit within 90 days. A Lease Agreement and Affordable Lease Addendum can be signed immediately.

# YEARLY ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

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Approximately 90 days before lease renewal, you will need to submit updated income and asset documentation to the Leasing Office so they can ensure that you are still under the maximum income guidelines. You will not be able to renew your Lease until you have submitted all required documentation. You should maintain records of your taxes, pay-stubs, bank statements and asset statements while living in the affordable unit. Maintaining records makes this yearly review very simple.

**Q: How long can I lease my affordable unit?**

**A:** As a **current resident only**, you are considered income eligible for an affordable unit as long as your household earns an income that does not exceed **140% of 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)** for a household of your size. Total Income for all *new* applying households must still always be below 80% of AMI.

*Using the 2009 Income Limits as an example:*

Household Size	2009 Income Limit (80% of 2009 Area Media Income)	2010 Income Limit for Current Tenants (140% of <b>2009 Income Limit</b> )
1	\$ 43,050	\$60,270
2	\$49,200	\$68,880
3	\$ 55,350	\$77,490
4	\$ 61,500	\$86,100
5	\$ 66,400	\$92,960
6	\$ 71,350	\$99,890

According to the table above for the years shown, if a household's income exceeds the 2010 Income Limit for Current Tenants at the time of their renewal, their unit shall still remain affordable until the next available market rate unit with the same or greater number of bedrooms is rented at an affordable price. Once this market rate apartment becomes newly deemed as affordable, the apartment that was previously deemed affordable can subsequently be rented at market rates. The household with earnings exceeding the 2010 Income Limit for Current Tenants can choose to stay in their apartment, yet would then have to pay the market rate rent.

**Q: Will my rent increase each year, and if so, by how much?**

**A:** Basically, your rent will not increase if the Boston MSA Area Median Income does not increase. When the AMI increases, your rent will increase by a few percentage points. The Area Median Income for this MSA did not change between 2005 and 2009 and therefore the base affordable rents did not increase.

# LODGE AT AMES POND DESCRIPTION

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**General.** The residential community will consist of 364 units on a 52-acre parcel of land, 91 units will be held for moderate income residents, and 273 will be for market rate residents. The proposed community will contain 13 residential buildings and a clubhouse of approximately 6,500 square feet. The residential buildings will be predominately 3 & 4 story splits with the 3 story component up the slope. The exterior elevations will be comprised of stone and hardi-plank wood siding. The entry to the community will include a decorative stone wall and other features to differentiate the community from the adjacent office park. The proposed community will have 682 total parking spaces, of which, 562 spaces will be surface parking spaces and 120 will be covered garages spaces.

**Amenities.** The Clubhouse will be the focal point of the community and will be visible for all ingress and egress traffic to the site. The lobby will contain a stone floor with decorative wood trim. Within the Clubhouse will be several unique spaces for multiple amenity features including the following:

- A business center with computers, a printer and fax,
- An elaborate clubroom with pool, shuffleboard and televisions for an active environment,
- A surround-sound viewing room that will accommodate approx. 24 persons for viewings,
- Kitchenette to service social events in the Clubhouse, and
- A complete fitness center with state of the art cardiovascular and weight training equipment.

The proposed community will also have several outdoor amenity spaces including a swimming pool with a heavily landscaped area surrounding the pool. A tot-lot will also be built on site to provide recreational space for children. As an amenity to both the residents of the proposed community and residents of the surrounding neighborhood, large amounts of green space will be maintained in the proposed community along Ames Pond. The residential buildings are setback from Ames Pond in such a way to maintain the existing vegetation around the perimeter and interior of the site. This will provide a large buffer between the proposed community and the surrounding neighbors and Ames Pond. In addition to providing the space for the buffer, many residential units will have views of Ames Pond.

**Units.** Residential units will feature a superior finish package including: nine foot ceilings and accent color walls; kitchens with slate floors, faux granite countertops, custom cabinetry, and black appliances; bathrooms with slate floors, custom cabinetry, framed mirrors, and soaking tubs; living areas with berber carpet floors and expansive windows; and bedrooms with berber carpet, ceiling fans, and large, walk-in closets.

**Parking.** Resident parking is provided in 562 surface parking stalls as well as an additional 120 detached garage stalls.

**Directions.** The site is accessed from Boston by taking I-93 North to the Andover/Tewksbury/Rte. 133 exit. Make a left off of exit ramp onto Route 133. Proceed West on Route 133 through a residential area for 1.5 – 2 miles. Shortly before reaching the major intersection for I-495, look for the entrance signs for Ames Pond Business Park on the left. Turn left into the park. At the traffic circle bear right onto Ames Pond Drive following signs for AVID Technology. The site is located on the left and across from two Avid Technology office buildings, situated on an undeveloped hill adjacent to and overlooking Ames Pond.