

Veridian Village at Hampshire College

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

July, 2007



Veridian Village
at HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE

What is Veridian Village at Hampshire College?

Hampshire plans to create a new residential community for people interested in living near a college campus. Homeowners will be able to take advantage of educational programs and cultural events while living in Amherst, a wonderful part of the Pioneer Valley.

Veridian Village will have approximately 129 homes located off West Street across from Hampshire's main campus. It will be designed for people who appreciate a strong sense of community. Careful attention will be paid to environmental design, resulting in a model of sustainable living. Homeowners will be considered members of the broader Hampshire community and will likely be active participants in programs and events at all Five Colleges, as well as at the National Yiddish Book Center and the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, both located adjacent to the Hampshire campus. Veridian Village will attract people who will bring their varied life experiences to our community, thus making Hampshire an even better place to live and learn.

Who can live here? Is there a minimum age?

There is no minimum age requirement, but we expect that Veridian Village will attract a broad segment of people anywhere from their late 40s and on, people who appreciate lifelong learning opportunities and enjoy intergenerational contacts.

Is this assisted living?

No, this project does not involve assisted living arrangements. However, Amherst is home to support service providers who can be contracted on an individual basis if such services are needed by any homeowners.

Do you have to be affiliated with Hampshire College to live here?

Anyone is invited to join this community. When we surveyed potentially interested people, many members of the Five College community—including alumni and faculty—responded with a high level of interest. So we expect that alumni and faculty from the Five Colleges, along with others who share similar interests, will be a part of this community. The central location of Veridian Village at Hampshire College will allow alumni of all the Five Colleges to maintain and strengthen their ties to their respective alma maters.

Is this a “gated” community?

Certainly not! Far from being gated or otherwise isolated from the surrounding community, Veridian Village will have all sorts of two-way connections with Hampshire College, the Five College community, the National Yiddish Book Center, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, the Amherst community, and the Pioneer Valley.

How does Veridian Village fit into Hampshire's Sustainable Campus Plan?

This community forms part of the campus master plan that Hampshire prepared in 2003 with input from all parts of the college and from its neighbors. The plans for Veridian Village are closely linked with the plans for the Atkins Village Center, the Cultural Village at Hampshire, Applewood and Upper Orchard, and the college's main campus.

Veridian Village will advance the college's innovative educational program by creating new opportunities for lifelong and intergenerational learning. It will also serve to enhance and strengthen Hampshire as an institution and as a community. And by following principles of sustainable design, this project will demonstrate how development can coexist with environmental stewardship.

Is Hampshire helping to finance the construction of Veridian Village? Will Hampshire benefit financially?

As the developer, Beacon Communities will bear the cost of financing the construction of Veridian Village. Hampshire will continue to own the land on which the community is located, and as a result will receive revenue that will be used to support the college's core academic mission.

How did Hampshire plan this project?

About three years ago, Hampshire first started to explore the idea of creating a lifelong learning community adjacent to campus. The community would serve current and retired faculty, alumni, and all others interested in staying or returning to our attractive valley and the Five College area. We sent an initial survey to 3,500 people—alumni and faculty from our schools, as well as members of the Five College Learning in Retirement Group—and about 1,200 responded, many indicating a keen interest in the concept. Since then, we have conducted several market studies and analyzed the concept's feasibility. We concluded that the project was feasible but that it would best be undertaken in partnership with a strong private developer. Thus we began searching for a development firm and eventually chose Beacon Communities LLC of Boston.

What is Beacon Communities LLC?

Beacon Communities LLC is a private company that develops, owns, and manages housing all over the eastern seaboard. The company has developed a wide range of housing, including historic rehabilitations, affordable multifamily rentals, and market-rate luxury condominiums.

What kind of process did Hampshire go through to select Beacon Communities?

Hampshire invited approximately 30 real estate developers to respond to a Request for Qualifications. The four most qualified developers were asked to respond to a Request for Proposals. Beacon's proposal showed us that Beacon is an experienced, creative, and financially strong company that shares Hampshire's vision for the proposed community. After careful deliberation and several interviews with Beacon's team, we chose Beacon Communities LLC.

So, what is Hampshire's role at the development now, and what is its role in the future?

Veridian Village will be a permanent part of Hampshire's campus. Currently, Hampshire is working with Beacon Communities in designing, permitting, and financing the development. Hampshire is also developing a college-based programmatic component for the new community.

What is the programmatic component?

Homeowners at Veridian Village will be able to participate in a variety of campus activities. These activities include auditing certain classes free of charge; using campus facilities, including the library, pool, outdoor tennis courts, and indoor track; attending social, academic, and cultural events; taking part in activities at the Hampshire Farm Center such as Hampshire's community supported agriculture program. We expect that the links between the college and the new community will grow and evolve over time.

What is the role of the other colleges in the Five College consortium and the two museums of Hampshire's "Cultural Village"?

The Five College consortium consists of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and Hampshire College. In the late 1960s, the other four schools helped create Hampshire, and without their initial and ongoing support Hampshire would never have been able to become what it is now. Cooperation abounds among the members of the consortium, and this cooperation may very well lead to the identification of ways to collaborate on programmatic initiatives that involve Veridian Village. The colleges, having cooperated in the research on this project, are all aware that their campus constituents may be very interested in joining the new community. For the time being, Hampshire is taking the lead in defining the programmatic connections to Veridian Village. Since Veridian Village is in the exact geographic center of the Five College area, members of Veridian Village will no doubt have easy reach beyond the Hampshire campus. Also, both the National Yiddish Book Center and the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art—the two museums in Hampshire's "Cultural Village"—have expressed great excitement and support for Hampshire's initiative, and both are open to exploring programmatic connections with Veridian Village.

How much land is Hampshire intending to develop? Doesn't this development conflict with Hampshire's belief in the importance of preserving open space?

The college has allocated approximately 50 acres to this project. Of those 50 acres, 33 acres—two-thirds of the project's area—will be put under a legally binding conservation restriction so that they remain undeveloped forever. Overall, Hampshire owns 850 acres of land. Much of Hampshire's land will remain open and undisturbed, and many of these areas are ideal for forests and natural habitat. Hampshire, in the campus master plan, has designated only a small portion of its land for development. In addition to the Veridian Village site, a tract of land surrounding Atkins Corner is under consideration for use in the Village Center that is in planning stages. No other projects have been identified at this time.

What are you doing to protect wetlands and rare species?

The project area is home to wetlands, vernal pools, riverfront areas, and rare species habitat. We intend to keep all development activity within designated upland areas of the site so that the wetlands and rare species habitat will be preserved, though a small amount of wetland—approximately 1,000 square feet—will have to be permanently disturbed in order to replace an existing, dilapidated stream culvert. Ecologically sensitive portions of the site will be signed, and in some places fenced, in order to encourage people to respect these delicate areas of our environment. As the project takes shape and after it is finished, we hope to have Hampshire faculty, students, and homeowners use the protected wetlands, to the extent allowed, as an extension of the classroom by going into the wetlands to study their ecology and to help remove invasive species.

Are you utilizing green design?

Consistent with the tenets of Hampshire College's mission and Sustainable Campus Plan, sustainable design and low impact development standards are being incorporated into every level of the design of Veridian Village. The development will achieve or exceed a Silver rating on the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Green Design Guidelines. To achieve this rating, the development will utilize green design features in its site design, its building materials and methods, and its finishes.

Rather than using the traditional stormwater management system of numerous catch basins and extensive underground piping, our plan uses sheet flow, rain gardens, and vegetated swales wherever possible. Roof runoff from the community building will be captured in rain barrels and used for irrigation in the community gardens. Roof runoff from the homes and roadways will infiltrate directly into the ground or flow through vegetated swales, which will aid in filtering runoff and enhancing water quality. Irrigation within the development will be limited to key areas at the entranceway and around the homes and community building, using water supplied by an on-site well and captured rainwater, rather than relying upon Amherst water supply services. The development's landscaping will use native plantings, particularly species that tolerate New England's varied weather conditions and require reduced amounts of water.

The buildings themselves will be built utilizing the principles of green design. All structures will feature tight building envelopes to increase energy efficiency. Construction will utilize modular building methods, waste-minimizing framing techniques, and some reclaimed lumber or certified lumber from sustainably managed forests. The homes and their HVAC systems will be energy efficient, utilizing energy-saving technology as well as natural light and ventilation. The units will be equipped with EnergyStar appliances and energy efficient windows. We will use bamboo flooring instead of wood. Paints and carpets will be low VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) in order to ensure high indoor air quality. We will not use vinyl siding. And, of course, the development will have bicycle racks, pedestrian walkways, and recycling areas.

Will the development pay real estate taxes?

The development will pay real estate taxes.

What are the site and floor plans? How many homes will there be and what are the bedroom sizes?

Veridian Village will have approximately 129 homes in a variety of types and sizes. Some of the homes will be in elevator buildings with 3 stories of flats over a first-floor parking level. These elevator buildings, also called the Great Homes, will feature a mix of 1- and 2-bedrooms that will range from approximately 1,100 to 1,400 square feet, respectively. In addition to the Great Homes, Veridian Village will have two-story townhomes in duplex and triplex configurations. These townhomes will have most living space on a single level, including master suites on the first floor, with second bedrooms, lofts, and storage spaces on the second floor. Master bedrooms in the Great Homes and the townhomes will range from approximately 170 to 220 square feet. The majority of the homes will be located around a central green and shielded from West Street by a swath of thickly forested wetland. A corner of the green will contain Veridian Commons, the community's commons building.

What kind of heat will there be? Will each homeowner pay for her own consumption and have control over her own thermostat?

Each home will have what is called a hydronic heating and cooling system. This system heats using hot water provided by a small water heater located in a mechanical room in each home. For cooling, the system uses refrigerant provided by a condenser. Homeowners will pay for and control their own heating and cooling.

Is there covered parking?

Every home in the Great Homes will have one covered spot on the first level. Outdoor parking spots within 60 feet of the building entrance will also be provided. Every townhome will have a two-car garage along with a driveway that can accommodate two cars.

What are the common amenities?

The approximately 6,000-square-foot Veridian Commons will include a great room for socializing and events, a library room for seminars and study, an art studio, another seminar room, a workshop, a fitness room, a yoga studio, a greenhouse, classrooms, and a guest apartment. Veridian Village will also have a community garden and walking paths. In addition, homeowners will have access to Hampshire's facilities, including the college's pool, tennis courts, and library.

Is there a fee for access to the College?

The monthly condominium fee at Veridian Village includes a \$15 administrative fee that goes to Hampshire College to pay for access to the College. Access to the College includes, among other things, use of Hampshire facilities and programs such as the Farm Center, the ability to audit classes with permission of the instructor, and a Hampshire.edu

email address.

What kind of Internet access will be available?

High-speed cable Internet access will be available from Comcast. We are also planning to provide wireless Internet in the Commons and on the green.

Is there space to store recreational gear?

Each home in the Great Home has a first floor storage room that is four feet wide and six feet deep. In addition, there are bike and kayak/canoe/windsurfer storage areas in the parking level of each Great Home. The townhouse units have a two-car garage as well as an unfinished storage area on the second floor.

Will I be able to customize my home?

The developer will be offering upgrade packages, focusing on kitchens, bathrooms and the ability to incorporate a four-season room in the townhomes. In addition to the highly regarded architectural firm of Bechtel Frank Erickson, the developer has retained two well respected interior designers, Dennis Duffy of Duffy Design Group and Mercedes Farrando, to select materials and oversee the design of each home's interior.

Will I be able to dry my clothes in my yard and plant a garden outside my home?

Yes. Veridian Village is a green community, and, as such, townhouse owners will be able to dry clothes in their backyards and plant gardens within designated areas.

What are the policies on smoking at Veridian?

No smoking will be allowed in common areas. However, smoking will be permitted in private homes. Insulation in the walls is quite airtight, helping prevent air from leaking between rooms and adjacent homes. Doors to the homes in the Great Home will have drop-down sweeps, which will minimize any flow of odors, air, and noise under the doors. The hallways in the Great Home will be under positive pressure, meaning that air pressure in the hall is greater than air pressure in the homes, keeping air from flowing out of the homes and into the hall.

Will there be any noise insulation to confine noise from humming appliance motors and resident activities in adjacent homes?

We do not expect that there will not be any noise or vibration transfer between rooms. We have retained a well-known Boston-area acoustical consultant, Cavanaugh Tocci, to review all plans to ensure that adequate noise insulation is provided. There will be soundproofing between rooms and homes as well as around the stairwells and elevator shafts in the Great Homes.

Will pesticides be used in lawn care?

Pesticides will not be used on the lawns.

Can I bring my pet?

Absolutely. Veridian Village will be a pet friendly community, although certain breeds of dogs may not be permitted.

How will the community be organized? Will there be on-site management? Will there be condo fees?

The community will be organized as a condominium, run by a condominium association. The condominium association will determine the community's laws. Homeowners will pay monthly condo fees, which will in part go to pay for on-site management.

What do the condo fees cover?

Condo fees cover all common area maintenance, staffing, insurance, and facilities costs. They will not cover property taxes associated with the individual homes. Homeowners will be responsible for property taxes on their homes and for the maintenance of the interiors of their homes. Prices will start in the high \$300s.

Can I lease my home if I'm away for an extended period of time?

Yes, homeowners at Veridian are allowed to lease their homes to others. However, because Veridian is intended to be a community, not a set of anonymous investor units, there are restrictions on leases. In general, homes may be leased so long as no more than three unrelated people are to be living in the home and so long as no more than ten percent of all the homes at Veridian are leased at any one time. That ten percent does not include homes owned by the Five Colleges and museums for visiting scholars and faculty.

When will construction start?

We expect that construction will begin in the first quarter of 2008.

When do you think construction will be completed?

The community will likely be built in several phases, so construction will conclude sometime around 2010. Construction for each phase will take approximately 14 months, with occupancy occurring upon completion.

How long is the developer liable for any defects in the buildings?

The developer issues a limited warranty to each buyer for his or her home. This warranty commences at the home closing and lasts for one year. Also, all the appliances in each home will have their own warranties that will be transferred to the buyer on closing.

Is there a web site? A phone number? How can someone learn more about the new community? How can someone reserve a home?

Veridian Village's web site can be found at www.VeridianVillage.com. Our information and sales phone number is 1.888.253.3903

What are the priority reservations?

A priority reservation reserves a prospective homeowner a place in line for home selection. We expect to begin the home selection process in early August. In this process, the marketing staff will meet with reservation holders according to the order in which reservations were placed. The marketing staff will review with each reservation holder the design, location, and price of each available home, as well as the available personal choice packages for customizing each home. Copies of condominium documents will also be provided at this time. Reservation holders will thus have the opportunity to select their homes prior to the start of general marketing of the community.