

Affordable housing proposed for downtown Biddeford

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A rendering of what two affordable housing buildings could look like in downtown Biddeford. *Contributed / Fathom Companies*

An affordable housing development may be built in Biddeford's Pearl Street Riverfront District by 2027.

Last month, the Biddeford City Council heard an updated report from Fathom Companies and Westbrook Development Company, who are partnering to develop two affordable apartment buildings for residents aged 55 and older.

Located at the corner of Lincoln and Elm streets in downtown Biddeford, the two buildings would have 45 units each for a total of 90 units.

Most of the units would be one-bedroom units, a decision that Westbrook Development Corporation Director of Real Estate Tyler Norod said was made to maximize space on an already-tight land site.

"We looked at this a whole bunch of different ways to maximize land space, that's financially feasible, fits on the site, and meets the city's goals," Norod said.

The apartments will match the Area Median Income (AMI) of downtown Biddeford, ranging from 50% of AMI to 60% of AMI.

This means that qualifying residents would be making anywhere from \$34,000 to \$47,000 a year per household.

“It’s starting to already match who’s in the area, and it’s probably people that are already closer to the end of their earning percentage,” Norod said.



A proposed layout of affordable housing buildings in downtown Biddeford. *Contributed / Fathom Companies*

According to census data, 66% of Biddeford households already residing in the downtown area would qualify for this housing by income level, providing workforce housing for residents in the area.

“We’re still talking about workforce housing, even though it’s senior,” Norod said. “There will be a large portion of this population working part time or full time.”

Biddeford Mayor Martin Grohman expressed his approval of the project last month, saying that Biddeford needs more affordable housing.

“We’re excited about this project,” Grohman said. “I think these defined affordable units will be a nice mix for downtown.”

The project will go back to the Biddeford Planning Board this month before going through a series of development steps over the next year.

By December of 2025, the developers hope to apply for funding, and the project could be built starting in 2026.

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