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URI and Gilbane partnership to build additional student housing

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Kingston, RI The University of Rhode Island is moving forward with a plan to construct additional housing on the Kingston Campus that will provide more than 1,100 additional beds for undergraduate and graduate students at the state’s flagship research university.

The university has selected Gilbane Development Company as the university’s development partner in a new public-private partnership. Partnering with a private developer represents an innovative approach to housing more students on campus in university-supervised buildings.

“We know many of our students want to live on campus and value the many benefits of on-campus living, including convenient access to campus resources and amenities,” said Ellen Reynolds, vice president for student affairs. “We are excited to move these plans forward and to offer additional and

enhanced on-campus living opportunities for our students.”

The plan calls for the construction of several new residential buildings with apartment-style suites, located in residential complexes on the campus. The project is currently in the feasibility study phase, with construction expected to begin in fall 2025.

Under the public-private partnership, Gilbane will lease university-owned land, where it will plan, finance, design, construct, and operate the new residence halls.

Gilbane was selected following a comprehensive request-for-information and request-for-proposal process that drew interest from several development companies.

“This public-private partnership offers many benefits to the University and our students,” said Abby Benson, vice president for administration and finance. “The partnership enables us to address the growing demand for on-campus housing expressed by URI students. It also enables us to develop new housing on an accelerated timeline while ensuring fiscal responsibility.”

“Gilbane is pleased to partner with URI on this significant project which reflects our shared commitment to enhancing the student experience,” said Zach Tronti, development director, Gilbane Development Co. “This collaboration underscores our dedication to developing high-quality, accessible housing that supports academic success and fosters a vibrant campus community, and it’s rewarding to be working towards a project which will have a lasting impact at URI and in our home state of Rhode Island.”

The expansion of on-campus housing supports the University’s strategic plan, Focus URI, and its priority to cultivate an engaged and inclusive learning environment. Once completed, the new residential spaces will represent an increase in the number of on-campus beds by more than 2,000 since 2012. URI opened the 500-bed Brookside Hall in 2020 and Hillside Hall, with its more than 400 beds, in 2012.

The planned construction continues a series of notable campus improvements at URI, which recently was named the top public university in New England by The Wall Street Journal. URI is nearing completion of a comprehensive renovation of the Fine Arts Center. Significant investments in the Narragansett Bay Campus, including the construction of a new ocean robotics laboratory, are bolstering the University’s role as a leader in the blue economy and ocean- and marine-related disciplines. And planning is now underway for a new, state-of-the-art biomedical sciences building.

The transformative on-campus housing project will serve both undergraduate and graduate students, with expected initial occupancy beginning in fall 2027.