

## Are 113 affordable units *really* coming to Fall River?

Mass. Law Reform Institute (MLRI)<sup>1</sup>

February 11, 2025

**Oct 12, 2024 headline in the Fall River Herald News: “Fall River has 113 new affordable units coming. Where are they and how to get one.”**

In October 2024 the [Mass. Law Reform Institute \(MLRI\)](#) published a report, [Fall River Needs a Balanced Housing Strategy](#), followed by an [article in Commonwealth-Beacon](#). The report documents the extreme scarcity and need for low cost rentals in Fall River and the city’s failure to develop affordable housing while prioritizing and supporting the ever increasing number of market rate and luxury projects. Although several Fall River officials and leaders have argued that the city has enough—if not more than enough—affordable rental housing, the facts in the MLRI report tell a different story. Advocates have urged Fall River to re-balance its approach and provide both market rate and affordable housing opportunities so that all residents will benefit from the city’s renewal.

But there is no sign that the city is even considering a meaningful change in direction. Almost every week we hear about plans for more high priced developments. Given the inequities in Fall River’s approach, city residents, especially renters, were undoubtedly excited to read in this Herald article that “the Community Development Agency (CDA) has committed to 11 affordable housing projects in various stages of development scattered throughout the city.” The story gave the impression that these units might be available sometime soon when it asks “where are they and how to get one” and provides a detailed explanation of eligibility criteria and the application process for low-income housing. But even in the unlikely (very unlikely) event that all 113 units were up and running in the next three years, it would still be a drop in the bucket compared to what’s needed and would pale in comparison to the [market rate boom](#) that the city has supported and prioritized over affordable housing,

To better understand the story behind the *Herald* story, MLRI submitted a public records request to the CDA asking for details and CDA Executive Director Mike Dion responded with descriptions of the projects. TMLRI’s summary and the responses themselves are at the end of this article.

The information provided by the CDA reveals that the *Herald* article is overly optimistic. It’s not clear how many units will be available, when they will be completed, and what the rents and prices will be. It is difficult to accurately forecast the fate of these projects because CDA’s descriptions of the proposed housing include a number of “maybes,” “proposed,” “tentative,” “to be determined,” “could change,” “being developed,” and “application to be completed.” Of

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course affordable housing development is complicated and lengthy, changes are likely, and the CDA may be able to tell us more as the process moves along. But even with the many uncertainties in information, the facts tells a different story.

**1. The information from the CDA shows that only 68-70 affordable units, not 113, might be created over the next three years.**

**2. Very few of the 113 projected units will be affordable to extremely low or very low-income households.** Most units are for households with incomes at 60% or 80% of area median income (AMI). While these rents and prices may technically be “affordable” they are far above the means of extremely low- and very low-income Fall River residents. 60% of AMI for a household of three is \$60,720 and 80% of AMI for the same households is \$80,950, while the median renter household income in the city is \$38,189. With the important exception of the Rock Street project—22 units meant for the unhoused which we assume will be rented at very low rates—these prices are too high for most Fall River renters. And the nine “affordable” one-bedroom condominiums will be for households with incomes at 80% of AMI - \$71,950 for a two-person household.

**3. Completion dates *at best* will be mostly in 2026 and 2027.** The timetable for most projects is tentative, with funding sources and affordability requirements still to be finalized

- **2025: 4** affordable rental units at 60% AMI and **10** affordable ownership units at 80% of AMI.<sup>2</sup>
- **2026: 10-11** affordable rental units.<sup>3</sup>
- **2027: 44-45** affordable rental units.<sup>4</sup>

**4. Some proposed projects might not be completed at all depending on financing and resources.**

**5. Most of the predicted affordable units have a small number of bedrooms—generally not suitable for families with children.** Although many plans are subject to change, it looks like most affordable units are SROs and one-bedroom units.. One exception is 320 East Main where all 6 units are 3-bedrooms. And the number of bedrooms in four of the units needs to be determined.

MLRI appreciates CDA’s responses to our public records request and looks forward to any corrections or clarifications they might have. Although we hope that lower income and working class Fall River residents will see 113 affordable units in the next three years, right now that doesn’t seem likely. But if the city wants to get serious about developing mixed income and

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<sup>2</sup> Treating 1438 Pleasant St. as completed in 2026, and not counting nine condos at the St Louis School which are not affordable but will sell at 100% AMI. Three of these dates are tentative.

<sup>3</sup> Counting 1438 Pleasant St and 627 S. Main affordable units.

<sup>4</sup> Including 22 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) and 1-bedroom units for the homeless and veterans.

affordable housing, it should shift priorities from 100% market rate developments to affordable and mixed income (like some of those in these 13 proposed projects), partner with community groups and affordable housing developers and adopt many of the recommendations in the [MLRI report on Fall River housing](#). Then we can look forward to many more than 113 affordable units.

## Summary of CDA’s Responses to MLRI’s public records request

### Eleven Affordable Developments – Unit Counts and Estimated Completion Dates

\* The number of affordable units with income limit at or below 80% of area median income (AMI) has not been

Project	Anticipated completion date (CDA)	Total Units per CDA	Projected # Affordable units (low and high estimate)*			Affordable ownership units	Total # Affordable units (range if not finalized)			Income Limit - Affordable Units			
			low	high	low		high	low	high	50% AMI	60% AMI	80% AMI	Income limit not known
501 Whipple St	Feb-March 2025	3	3	-	3	-	3	-	3		3	-	***
St. Louis School**	May-June 2025	18	-	-	-	9	9	-	9	-	-	9	-
78 Thomas St	July 2025 "tentative"	2	1	-	1	1	2	-	2		-	-	2
<b>2025 Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
1438 Pleasant St	Winter 2025	13	7	-	7	-	7	-	7	2	5		***
1446-1454 Pleasant St	March 2026	10	3	-	4	-	3	-	4		4		***
<b>2026 Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>
202 Rock St	Goal 12/31/ 2026	22	22	-	22	-	22	-	22	4	12		6
627 South Main St	Winter of 2026	11	2	-	3	-	2	-	3				3
529 Eastern Ave	Winter 2026	12	4	-	4	-	4	-	4		4		***
1616 Pleasant St	Spring 2027	10	4	-	4	-	4	-	4				4
1270 Pleasant St	Spring 2027	15	6	-	6	-	6	-	6				6
320 East Main St	Winter 2026	6	6	-	6	-	6	-	6				6
<b>2027 Total</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>122</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>27</b>

finalized for all projects. This column reflects the range CDA reports (lowest and highest number) for each project.

\*\* This project will also have 9 units at 100% AMI

\*\*\* CDA did not specify the income limits for the affordable units in most projects. This table assumes rental projects using HOME funds will follow the standard HUD income targeting rule setting an upper income limit of 60% AMI with at least 20% of the HOME units having an income limit of 50% AMI (projects with 5 or more HOME units).

## **CDA responses to MLRI public records request**

### 320 Main Street – 320 East Main Street

- Number of affordable units and number of market rate units – 6 affordable units
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units Six 3-bedroom units
- Anticipated income eligibility for the affordable units (as a percent of AMI) - See attached HUD Income Limits
- Anticipated rents for affordable and market rate units – See attached HUD Rental Limits
- Current status of development process – Application to be completed
- Amounts and sources of secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing - TBD
- What is meant by "being developed" – in the process of development
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – Winter of 2026

### 1616 Pleasant St

- Explanation of “investor committed” – Part of the Flint/Pleasant Street Revitalization Project – HOME funds will be committed.
- Name and address of committed investor – Dela Pleasant R LLC, 497 Briggs Rd. Westport MA 02790
- Amounts and sources of secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing – 1.75 million in CPA funding, HOME funds TBD
- Number of affordable and market rate units – Some affordable Some Market Rate TBD (FRCDA wants 4 out of 10 units affordable but this could change)
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – TBD (undecided at this time)
- Anticipated income eligibility (as a percent of AMI) – See Attached HUD Guidelines
- Anticipated rents See Attached HUD Guidelines
- Current status of development process - Architectural Drawings are complete, hiring housing consultant, going for variances, new roof being finished. CPA Application submitted
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – Spring of 2027

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### 1270 Pleasant St (Greany Building)

- Explanation of “committed” as noted in the article - Part of the Flint/Pleasant Street Revitalization Project – HOME funds will be committed.
- Name and address of current owner – Ronald Oliveira, Trustee for Rosso Investment Realty Trust, 5 Archer’s Way, Acushnet, MA
- Amounts and sources of secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing – 3 million CPA funding, HOME funds TBD
- Number of affordable and market rate units - Some affordable Some Market Rate TBD (FRCDA wants 6 out of 15 units affordable but this could change)
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units - TBD (undecided at this time)
- Anticipated income eligibility (as a percent of AMI) - See Attached HUD Guidelines

- Anticipated rents - See Attached HUD Guidelines
- Current status of development process - Architectural Drawings are complete, hiring housing consultant, going for variances
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy - Spring of 2027

#### 529 Eastern Ave (Notre Dame Rectory)

- Definition of "being developed" as noted in the article – going through the process to develop affordable housing
- Name and address of current owner – River Fall 529 LLC 10 Prescott Road Lynn MA 01902
- Amount of committed or anticipated CPA funding and historic tax credits – Not aware of any committed or anticipated funding.
- Amounts and sources of other secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing - \$175,000 per HOME unit. Total Home Funding - \$700,000.00 Waiting on other sources.
- Number of affordable units and number of market rate units – 4 affordable units and 8 market rate units
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – To be determined
- Anticipated income eligibility for the affordable units (as a percent of AMI) – See attached HUD Limits
- Anticipated rents – See attached HUD Limits
- Current status of development process – Waiting on other Funding Sources.
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – Winter 2026

#### 27 South Main St (Academica Building) – See Attached Article

- Definition of "being developed" as cited in the article – See Attached Guidelines
- Name and address of current owner – KAT Management LLC, 463 William Street, Fall River, MA 02721
- Amount of secured or anticipated historic tax credits and CPA funding – Not that I am aware of. CPA 's decision was not favorable
- Amounts and sources of other secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing – 3 to 4 million for rehab. FRCDA committed \$350,000 to the project
- Number of affordable and market rate units – 2 or 3 Affordable units 8 or 9 market rate units
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – 4 one bedrooms and 7 two bedrooms. This probably will change but not drastically
- Anticipated income eligibility (as a percent of AMI) - See Attached Guidelines
- Anticipated rents - See Attached Guidelines
- Current status of development process – Architectural Plans in process and FRCDA Application Completed.
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – Winter of 2026

### 1446-1454 Pleasant St

- Name and address of current owner and proposed owner “in the closing process” – Tetrault Real Estate
- Amounts and sources of secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing – Tentatively Around 2 million dollars with FRCDA HOME Commitment of \$600,000.00 to \$800,000.00
- Anticipated income eligibility (as a percent of AMI) – See HUD Attached Guidelines
- Anticipated rents – See Attached Guidelines
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – Tentatively 10 1 bedroom units
- Number of affordable and market rate units – Tentatively 3 or 4 affordable units 6 or 7 market rate units
- Current status of development process – Architectural Design
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – March 2026

### 202 Rock Street

- The "P&S" as noted in the article – See attached Purchase and Sales Agreement
- Minutes of the public hearing held on 9.26.24 on a proposed application to HUD for \$2.5 million under the PRO Housing Program to rehab the building. – Included in the Purchase and Sale Agreement
- A copy of the PRO application to HUD and the date it was submitted – See attached Application Submitted on October 15, 2024
- Amounts and sources of other secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing – See attached Application
- Number of affordable units and number of market rate units – No Market Rate Units
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – 16 Single Room Occupancy Units and 6 proposed 1-Bedroom units. All Affordable Units
- Anticipated income eligibility for the affordable units (as a percent of AMI) – See attached HUD Schedule
- Anticipated rents – See attached HUD Schedule
- Current status of development process – Architectural design starting after February closing
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – Two years for completion

### 501 Whipple Street

- Name and address of current owner – Community Housing Resource Board Inc.
- Amount of secured or anticipated funding/financing from HOME or other sources - \$831,830 Purchase and Rehabilitation
- Number of affordable and market rate units – 3 Units of Affordable Housing No Market Rate units
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – 1 Four Bedroom Unit and 2 Three Bedroom Units

- Anticipated Income eligibility for each of the units (as a percent of AMI) - See attached HUD Schedule
- Anticipated rents - See attached HUD Schedule
- Current status of development process – 80% Complete
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – February/March 2025

#### 78 Thomas St

- Name and address of current owner – City of Fall River (Will be transferred to the Community Housing Resource Board Inc.)
- Amounts and sources of secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing – TBD Do not know cost of rehabilitation
- Number of affordable units and number of market rate units – 2 Affordable Units No Market Rate Units
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – 2 Two Bedroom Units
- Anticipated income eligibility (as a percentage of AMI) - See attached HUD Schedule
- Anticipated rents - See attached HUD Schedule
- Current status of development process – Property was Cleaned Out. Lead/Asbestos/Radon testing on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Tentatively going out to bid by Jan 15<sup>th</sup>
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – Tentatively July 2025

#### 1438 Pleasant Street

- Definition of "committed to" as cited in the article: - Committed to means “providing funding”
- Name and address of current owner – Tetrault Real Estate
- Amount of secured or anticipated historic tax credits and CPA funding or financing – None that I am aware of
- Amounts and sources of secured, committed or anticipated other funding – 1.4 million in HOME Funding and 2 million in Owners Private Funding
- Anticipated income eligibility (as a percent of AMI) - See attached HUD Schedule
- Anticipated rents - See attached HUD Schedule
- Number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – 13 One Bedroom Units
- Number of affordable and market rate units – 7 Units are Affordable and 6 Units are Market Rate Units
- Current status of development process – Loan Closing
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – Tentatively Winter of 2025

#### St. Louis School (403 Division St) – See Attached Newspaper Article

- Name and address of current owner – SEB Housing LLC, 257 Hillside Ave. Needham MA 02494



- Number of affordable rental units, number of affordable condominiums and number of market rate rentals or condominiums – 18 Condominium units with 12 having a Fall River Preference
- Amounts and sources of secured, committed or anticipated funding or financing - No Funding from FRCDA. 5 million from MassHousing Commonwealth Builder Program, 1.95 million from RD Advisors.
- For the rental units - number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – No Rental Units
- For the condominiums - number of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 3+ bedroom units – 9 1 bedroom units and 9 two bedroom units
- Anticipated income eligibility for the rental units and condominiums (as a percentage of AMI) – See attached HUD limits
- Anticipated rents or purchase price - TBD by MassHousing. FRCDA will be offering a \$10,000 grant for a First-time homebuyer.
- Current status of development process – Construction in Progress
- Anticipated date of completion and occupancy – May/June 2025