

# Lehigh Valley Industrial Park to gift land for 120 mixed-income homes in Bethlehem

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“Today is one of the biggest days we’ve had in the City of Bethlehem in a long time,” Mayor J. William Reynolds said in introducing an announcement Wednesday on a major new housing development.

Gateway on Fourth is a new mixed-income housing development of 120 units 15 years in the making, officials said.

Alan Jennings, the retired executive director of Community Action Lehigh Valley on Southside, said that this kind of project was hotly debated for years. Previous leadership has pushed for this development on Southside Bethlehem and came up short.

The development property — formerly the Szilagyi Fuel and Dancho sites at 1400-1414 E. Fourth St. — is a gateway to the city, an important location. In years past murals, streetlamps, and a nearby skatepark were added to the area.

Finally, housing advocates have the land to build on.



*A rendering released Wednesday, April 10, 2024, by City of Bethlehem officials shows the newly proposed Gateway on Fourth 120-home new mixed-income housing development on Southside. Courtesy image | For lehighvalleylive.com*

Lehigh Valley Industrial Park Inc. President Kerry Wrobel said that his nonprofit development corporation would invest over \$4 million for the site and donate the land to the project. Wrobel said that bringing affordable housing to South Bethlehem would be part of LVIP's legacy. Wrobel's organization owns the nearby LVIP VII, its seventh industrial park in the region, built on the remnants of Bethlehem Steel Corp.

Together, the partners behind the project found a developer: Pennrose, described by the city as a leader in building affordable housing.

Bethlehem Deputy Director of Community Development Sara Satullo emphasized South Bethlehem's role as a place for new residents, as well as a place for stable living that can support generations of families. She called Pennrose the right developer to continue that vision of Bethlehem with this new development.

Pennrose Regional Vice President Jacob Fisher said mixed-income developments are his company's bread and butter. He spoke about how important it is for residents to have access to the South Bethlehem Greenway that runs near the site and along the Bethlehem Skateplaza. They are hiring local architects and engineers to tackle the project.



*Lehigh Valley Industrial Park Inc. President Kerry Wrobel speaks at an announcement Wednesday, April 10, 2024, on the newly proposed Gateway on Fourth 120-home new mixed-income housing development on Southside Bethlehem.*

The Gateway on Fourth will be Bethlehem's first mixed-income housing development offering both market-rate and affordable rental apartments, with one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, city officials said. The proposal calls for two, four-story buildings with first-floor commercial space fronting East Fourth Street, a key artery into Southside, along with neighborhood-compatible stacked townhomes on the more residential East Fifth Street.

The affordable homes will be available for residents at 20% to 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI), which is about \$13,780 to \$41,340 for a one-person household and \$19,660 to \$58,980 for a four-person household. A one-bedroom affordable unit could cost between \$369 to \$1,107 per month, with market-rate rents to be determined, officials said.

The development will be built over two phases, pending tax credit awards, city officials said. Construction is anticipated to begin on the first phase in the fall of 2026. The Gateway on Fourth would be Bethlehem's first tax credit project since HDC Mid-Atlantic's Southside Lofts opened in 2014.

"This is investing in people, and this is investing in the neighborhood," Reynolds said.