

Hazard Tower Narrative Description of the Project

Overview

The South Portland Housing Development Corporation (SPHDC), the development arm of the South Portland Housing Authority (SPHA), is seeking Cumberland County HOME Consortium funds to enable the rehabilitation of Hazard Tower, an existing income-restricted residential building located at 425 Broadway in South Portland. The 100-unit property was originally built in 1972 and requires significant modernization to continue serving the community's affordable housing needs for decades to come.

The SPHA's portfolio is a combination of Public Housing created through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development programs, and Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) apartments funded through the IRS. SPHA currently manages roughly 850 housing units, with one 43-unit project currently under construction, and another 38-unit that we anticipate will break ground in the next year.

91 apartments in Hazard Tower will remain subsidized and restricted to those making 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) or less with the support of an existing HAP Contract. The existing building currently contains 65 studio apartments, 29 one-bedroom apartments, and 6 two-bedroom apartments. As part of the rehabilitation scope, a community room will be converted into three additional units, consisting of one studio, one one-bedroom, and one two-bedroom apartment, bringing the total to 66 studios, 30 one-bedroom units, and 7 two-bedroom units. The building will retain a community room on the first floor for residents.

Additional scope includes, but is not limited to, converting from natural gas to heat pump heating and cooling, replacing elevators, windows, and fire alarm systems, as well as landscaping, improving insulation, siding, and the roof.

Project Benefits

As of November of 2025, there were 750 individuals and families on the waiting list for SPHA units. There is a huge demand for affordable units in South Portland and the Greater Portland/Cumberland County region as a whole. As housing prices continue to soar, the need to preserve and improve existing affordable housing is greater now than ever before. This rehabilitation project will ensure that 100 critically important affordable units remain safe, comfortable, and available for the community for generations to come.

The existing Hazard Tower is of a similar size and style as the nearby Betsy Ross House & Mill Cove Apartments and maintains a residential density appropriate for the neighborhood. The property is located just off Broadway, one of the City's major transportation arteries, and is well served by public transportation and the City's Greenbelt Trail (which abuts the site). It sits in the Mill Cove neighborhood, one of South Portland's more densely populated areas. The comprehensive rehabilitation of these 100 affordable housing units will continue to be managed by SPHA's experienced and professional staff.

The residents of Hazard Tower benefit greatly from its excellent location. The Broadway corridor provides easy access to the retail and employment centers in downtown Portland, Mill Creek, Knightville, and the Maine Mall area. Access to these centers is possible via South Portland's fixed route bus system (which has a stop in front of the property), the Greenbelt trail system (which runs along the property), or a private vehicle.

Hazard Tower has fostered a close-knit sense of community over its 50+ years of operation, both amongst residents and the neighboring community at large. Neighborhood groups have utilized the building's common spaces, and many current residents have deep ties to the surrounding Ferry Village and Mill Cove neighborhoods. A full schedule of activities and social events are available within the building and shared with residents. The rehabilitation project will enhance these interior and exterior community spaces and ensure they remain vibrant gathering places for years to come.

The rehabilitation project will also maintain revenue for the City of South Portland by preserving and improving this valuable housing asset. Hazard Tower has no impact on local school capacity and less impact on local infrastructure, roads, and traffic counts than a similar market-rate development would.

Summary

As described above, the Hazard Tower rehabilitation project can be viewed as **a housing preservation, economic development, and community improvement initiative**. This project seeks to **modernize and preserve 100 existing affordable housing units** in a dense, urban area where such housing is desperately needed. Current and future residents will benefit from improved, quality, stable and safe housing in an area that is highly accessible and walkable and near to many of the amenities and attractions that South Portland has to offer. The City of South Portland will benefit from the continued revenue and the preservation of a key community asset. And the Greater Portland region and Cumberland County will benefit by retaining and improving 100 affordable housing units within its extremely limited supply.