



October 29, 2024



Gilbane, Purdue Fort Wayne Break Ground on 600-Bed Student Housing Complex

For leaders and students at Purdue University Fort Wayne, August 2026 can't come soon enough. That's when a four-story, 213,000-square-foot apartment complex near Ginsberg Hall on the university's **North Campus** is scheduled to open—just in time for the start of the fall semester.

A groundbreaking ceremony took place Tuesday for this public-private partnership with Gilbane Development Company. When completed, the project will help fulfill Purdue Fort Wayne's yearslong goal of adding more student housing on campus.

Preliminary work on the \$90-\$100 million development began in September. Financing was secured by a private nonprofit foundation. The project team includes Gilbane Development Company as developer, Gilbane Building Company as construction manager, AVB as design-builder, and Progressive AE as architect. When completed, the complex will be owned by Strategic Facility Partners and operated by Inwood Management.

"Today marks an exciting milestone as we break ground on this highly anticipated and much-needed

student housing project with Purdue University Fort Wayne. At Gilbane, we are committed to fostering partnerships that enhance campus environments and create vibrant, comfortable, and functional spaces for learning and collaboration,” said Geoff Eisenacher, vice president, Gilbane Development Company. “This public-private partnership exemplifies how teamwork and shared vision can deliver lasting value to the university, its students, and the broader community.”

Accommodations will include studio to four-bedroom options spread out over 176 units. The total number of beds is projected to be 600. Just under half will be reserved for students contracting with the university for housing. The remaining beds will be available to other students – including those enrolled at other colleges and universities – who will lease with the complex directly.

As PFW continues its transition from a commuter campus to one that offers a more traditional residential environment, student housing offered by the university has been at full capacity for seven consecutive fall semesters. At the start of the current academic year, 1,533 students chose to take advantage of this opportunity.

“This project, and the Surack–Sweetwater Music Industry Building project that broke ground earlier this fall, are just two examples of our commitment to support enhanced student success with the infrastructure needed to make it happen,” Purdue Fort Wayne Chancellor Ron Elsenbaumer said. “This is an exciting time to be on campus, and our current construction activity is an indicator of our university’s growing momentum.”

Key elements of the new complex, which will be called Trace at Purdue Fort Wayne, will feature a variety of indoor amenities including a convenience store, a fitness center, a gaming room, quiet study space, entrance and floor lounges, a reception area, a leasing office, and multi-purpose spaces.

Outside, residents will enjoy a hammock farm, plenty of green space, a sand volleyball court, a basketball court, grilling areas, and fire pits. The amenities are designed to promote student health and wellness throughout the duration of their time at PFW.

In addition to enhancing the student living experience, the project emphasizes sustainability, incorporating energy-efficient appliances, lighting, water conservation measures, native landscaping, stormwater treatment, and construction waste management strategies. These initiatives align with Gilbane’s commitment to creating healthy, efficient, and cost-saving green buildings for PFW.

The complex, which has been designed to have minimal impact on the neighborhood, will include a generous public drop-off area for campus shuttles and rideshares, as well as strategic parking placement with over 450 spaces to complement multiple pedestrian connections.

Joining Eisenacher and Elsenbaumer on the podium during Tuesday’s groundbreaking ceremony were Dana Berkes, vice president of the PFW Foundation, Ian Hyatt, chief of staff to Purdue University President Mung Chiang, and Krissy Surface, PFW vice chancellor for enrollment management and the student experience.

An animated fly-through video of the complex created by Gilbane can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

Don Life is an official university communication sent weekly on Wednesday to all currently enrolled students. Don Life Special Edition is a supplement to the regularly scheduled newsletter. It covers breaking news and time-sensitive information directly related to university operations.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY
FORT WAYNE

