

Mid Coast to build new \$6M building in Bath

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Architectural rendering of the 20,000-square-foot, two-story medical building JHR Development plans to build in downtown Bath and lease to Mid Coast Medical Group, which will relocate staff there currently working from its Washington Street location.

Mid Coast Medical Group has announced plans to open a new primary care medical building in downtown Bath in 2015. The new medical facility would be located at the corner of Centre and Franklin streets where it should be easily accessible and have ample parking.

Local developer JHR Development has been working with Bath officials to finalize plans for the 20,000 square-foot, two-story facility, valued at more than \$6 million. JHR also developed Brunswick Station that Mid Coast Health anchors with its Primary Care & Walk-in Clinic.

“The facility that we are developing in downtown Bath is a great collaboration among several local partners,” said J. Hilary Rockett, JHR Development Owner/Manager. “With our past experience working with Mid Coast and the project architects and builders, as well as a great opportunity to work with the City of Bath, we are expecting this project to be mutually beneficial and rewarding for all involved.”

The Mid Coast Medical Group says it will relocate its team of healthcare providers and support staff to the new building from its current Washington Street location and states “The practice specializes in keeping patients healthy and well, offering preventative and chronic disease care as well as integrated behavioral health counseling. New and existing patients will be welcome.”

The Bath team that will move to the new building includes eight physicians, one physician assistant, 26 support staff members and one full time licensed clinical social worker that will be in the role of the integrated behavioral health provider, said Steven Trockman, the director of communications for Mid Coast Health Services, which he noted has already ramped up its provider workforce in Bath so “this site would really accommodate them better.”

The project is scheduled to go before the Bath Planning Board March 18 for a pre-application workshop and a full review at a subsequent meeting. Andrew Deci, the city's director of planning and development, said the project requires site plan approval.

“We are delighted for this opportunity to establish a modern medical facility in a convenient Bath location,” said Lois Skillings, President and CEO of Mid Coast Health Services. “Consistent with our mission to provide high quality, patient-centered care to our community, this facility will benefit the city, its residents, and the broader region by expanding healthcare services and providing easier access for all.”

“Construction of this new practice space in Bath represents an important next step in Mid Coast's commitment to our patients and to the health of our community,” said Nancy A. Hasenfus, an internal medicine physician with the practice. “Like our recently opened practice in Topsham, this space is being crafted to further improve the coordination of care and to facilitate seamless communication among the provider team. Designing a clinical space that supports patient participation in their care enables excellent health outcomes.”

Designed by Maine-based architects Gawron Turgeon, the preliminary drawings indicate an emphasis on blending with the existing historic architecture of downtown Bath. SMRT of Portland will design the interior space, three-quarters of which will be occupied by the Mid Coast Medical Group practice. Wright-Ryan Construction of Portland has been contracted to oversee construction of the building.

The new space will be built to accommodate delivery of an advanced model of care known as the Patient-Centered Medical Home, a concept that “encourages patients to become involved with their own care and has proven to improve outcomes and lower costs of healthcare. All Mid Coast Medical Group primary care offices have transitioned to this delivery model, supporting its mission to transform healthcare in the region.”

Trockman said, “We've been looking for some time in Bath,” where Mid Coast Medical Group has a growing practice with more providers, “and we want to make sure we're open to new patients seeking primary care. We really needed more room.”

“We've been looking at this project for over a year and weighing our options,” which included staying put where they were, looking for existing real estate in Bath or building something new, Trockman said, “and of course we will be leasing this property.”

Jennifer Geiger, Executive Director of Main Street Bath, said the project is very positive, noting that “We keep an eye on the mix of businesses in the downtown but having a high traffic, high quality service business opening right in our downtown, it's going to bring lots of traffic. From what I understand the project is going to be very attractive and it is sensitive to the historic surroundings.” Groundbreaking for the project is slated this summer.