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Patrick Administration Celebrates Investments To Create New, Affordable Housing Options In Holyoke

The site of the former Holyoke Catholic will be redeveloped into 54 new affordable rental units, create 104 jobs

HOLYOKE – Monday, August 18, 2014 – Patrick Administration Officials today joined Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse and other state and local officials to celebrate the groundbreaking of Chestnut Park in Holyoke. The redevelopment of the former Holyoke Catholic High School, supported with over \$3.5 million in affordable housing resources from the Patrick Administration, will create 54 new affordable rental units and 104 construction jobs in downtown Holyoke.

“This project is an important step toward the goal of strengthening our supply of affordable housing for citizens of the Commonwealth,” said Senator Humason. “This investment will pay dividends in and around the city of Holyoke.”

“Housing is one of the cornerstones of a growing economy,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Greg Bialecki. “Through this new development we are continuing to revitalize downtown Holyoke, expanding neighborhoods where residents can live, work and play.”

The Chestnut Park project is the adaptive reuse of four historic, vacant buildings on the site of the former Holyoke Catholic School. The affordable housing development will have a total of 54 rental units, six of which will be studios, 24 one-bedroom units and 24 two-bedroom units.

“DHCD is pleased to fund this important housing development that will help to continue downtown revitalization efforts in Holyoke,” said Undersecretary of Housing and Community Development Aaron Gornstein. “This project not only provides new housing opportunities for families, but it will stimulate local economic activity. We congratulate Weld Management and appreciate the leadership of Mayor Morse and other local, state, and federal elected officials who have helped make this project a reality.”

“Today's groundbreaking ceremony represents the city's continued commitment to a vibrant, densely-populated downtown,” said Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse. “I thank Denis Walsh for making this investment in Holyoke, and I can't wait to see the finished product. Because of the special place Holyoke Catholic has in so many people's hearts, this project is of particular significance to our city. I am proud to see that this structure, so vital to Holyoke's past, will now be a part of a bright future for downtown Holyoke.”

Since 2007, the Patrick Administration has invested over \$1 billion in state and federal resources to create 24,000 units of housing, of which approximately 22,000 are affordable.

This past June, Patrick Administration officials broke ground on improvements to the Holyoke Canal Walk. The \$3.5 million investment in the Gateway City of Holyoke will connect pedestrians to historic Holyoke, the Holyoke Innovation District and Heritage State Park. This second phase of the Canal Walk project will create approximately 3,000 feet of additional pedestrian walkways around the Holyoke Canal to connect to Heritage State Park, a Department of Conservation and Recreation facility. The work includes rehabilitation of a previously unused railroad bridge for pedestrian use along with sidewalk improvements, benches, lookouts over the canal and lighting.

"I am excited to see the old Holyoke catholic buildings being reused and not abandon any longer," said Representative Aaron Vega. “This project will be an anchor in our downtown revitalization and will spur continued investment in Holyoke.”

Also in June, Governor Patrick released his Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Capital Investment Plan, which builds upon the Administration's successful efforts to stimulate job creation and support long-term economic growth by making record level investments in higher education, innovation and infrastructure projects. The FY15 Capital Plan continues to make investments in low-income housing development, including increased levels of funding for programs that support the production and preservation of affordable housing for low-income families and individuals, as well as community-based housing for clients of the Department of Mental Health and Department of Developmental Services.

In November 2012, Governor Patrick announced the Commonwealth's goal of creating 10,000 multi-family housing units per year. By creating this type of housing, which is attractive to young families and individuals, Massachusetts is better prepared to keep in state the skilled, young workforce which employers are seeking.

Last fall, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Greg Bialecki accepted a national “Workforce Housing” award from the Urban Land Institute, recognizing the Patrick Administration's leadership in pursuing a strategy to increase the supply of housing needed, and in the places needed, for its workforce.

The Administration has implemented the following strategy to make all of the state's 26 Gateway community's centers of economic activity:

- Provide long-term investments in education, innovation and infrastructure, with special attention to the growth potential of each city's entrepreneurs and small businesses;
- Leverage the potential of each community's distinctive assets, including their educational, medical and cultural institutions and their historic buildings and neighborhoods; and
- Connect Gateway Cities to other local, state and global centers of innovation and economic activity.

Improving the quality and accessibility of affordable housing is a priority for the Patrick Administration. Along with creating new housing, the Administration has made significant investments in the Commonwealth's public housing supply, by preserving and improving the 46,000 housing units in the system through increased capital funding, increased operating subsidies and changes in management of those resources.

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