

# The Patriot Ledger

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## At Quincy project site, Baker calls for \$1.3 billion in housing funding

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QUINCY – Gov. Charlie Baker used the site of a planned Quincy Point affordable-housing development as the backdrop to announce that his administration was seeking \$1.3 billion for such projects.

“For us to be successful over time ... we have to create more housing units young people and young families can live in,” Baker said to a small crowd at 116 E. Howard St.

Baker was joined by state and local officials including Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, Quincy Mayor Thomas Koch and state Sen. John Keenan in speaking behind the long-vacant property in Quincy Point on Monday afternoon.

Within the next few months, Developers Neighborworks Southern Mass and WinnCompanies plan to break ground on a project on that site, replacing the current blighted building with a new five-story structure featuring 140 apartments. Of those apartments, 20 percent would be restricted to people with very low incomes and 60-percent to people with middle-of-the-road incomes, with the rest at market rate.

The officials pointed to the range of options and the number of apartments for the middle tier of incomes in this mixed-income development as a good example of what the state wants to facilitate.

What the state calls “workforce housing” – units restricted to around the area’s median income, as the 86 in this project are – are getting more attention in places such as Quincy where property values and rents rise rapidly. Proponents tout workforce housing as a way to keep city life affordable for the people who make it run – teachers, police officers and small business owners, for example.

“They will find Quincy as a place where they can lay down roots,” Polito said.

In Koch’s State of the City address earlier this year, Quincy’s mayor said that due to the continually rising costs of housing in Quincy, it’s a priority for the city to identify locations for workforce housing.

If Baker’s bond bill is passed, the state would have \$1.5 billion in borrowing capacity designated to providing more affordable housing. The proposal includes \$650 million for public housing modernization and redevelopment, \$400 million for the production and preservation of traditional affordable housing, and \$216 million for housing serving vulnerable populations, according to the governor’s office.

In particular, it targets “gateway cities” such as Quincy that are midsize urban centers around the state. This Quincy Point Project – called The Watson – received funding and tax breaks from the state, as well as \$1.25 million from the city’s affordable-housing trust.

“The city of Quincy has some skin in the game with this project,” Koch said.

Ed Cafasso, a spokesman for WinnCompanies, said that the developers plan for The Watson to open in July 2018. As well as 245 parking spaces, it’ll feature a gym, a community room and a courtyard. He said that there will be no difference between the income-restricted apartments and the ones that aren’t.

“They’ll all look like market-rate apartments,” he said.

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