

Boston archdiocese starts work on affordable housing complex

John Lavenburg/Crux

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NEW YORK – The Archdiocese of Boston and governor’s office have broken ground on what will be a community of more than a dozen affordable housing units.

The initiative is part of an effort to help ease growing housing struggles – particularly for elders – in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll joined archdiocesan leaders on June 12 for the groundbreaking of 150 River Street Village in Mattapan, Massachusetts, which over the next year will be transformed from a vacant lot, owned by the city of Boston, into 30 units of mixed-income, age-restricted studio and one-bedroom rental units.

Driscoll touted the development as something that could lower the cost of housing for all in the state.

“Repurposing public land for housing is one of the creative solutions we have in our toolkit to lower the cost of housing for all,” Driscoll said. “The new River Street Village will allow people to age in place with dignity and bring them a stable place to call home. This is how we invest in community and housing at the same time, and I’m thrilled to support this project.”

Driscoll was joined at the groundbreaking by Auxiliary Bishop Peter Uglietto of Boston. Commenting on the development, Cardinal Seán O’Malley of Boston highlighted that access to a secure and safe home is a human right.

“Access to a secure and safe home is a basic human right. We look forward to the construction of this new community being completed and welcoming the new residents,” O’Malley said in a statement. “We are very grateful for the collaboration of our partners in the community, City and State government, as we continue to work together to bring desperately needed affordable housing to Boston neighborhoods.”

The groundbreaking of the development comes at a time when the state – one of the most expensive in the nation to live in – grapples with a housing crisis. The state ranks as one of the most expensive states to buy a home in, with the average cost of a home well over \$500,000. The high costs of living have not only affected first time home buyers and families, but also seniors on fixed incomes.

The new development is intended for seniors with incomes in the range of \$30,000-\$70,000. The development should be completed sometime in 2025, according to the archdiocese.

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu said the new development will help older residents age comfortably.

“150 River Street Village will help ensure that our older residents can age in place and build with the community they know and love,” Wu said in a statement. “As we continue our work to make Boston a home for everyone, the City is thrilled to support the creation of new income-restricted housing in Mattapan. I’m grateful to our partners for all their work to move this project forward and ensure that we creatively use available public land to create more housing across our communities.”

Financing for the development includes funding from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities; Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation; MassDevelopment; the City of Boston’s Mayor’s Office of Housing, and Neighborhood Housing Trust; Red Stone Equity Partners; Eastern Bank; and MassHousing.

The archdiocese’s Planning Office for Urban Affairs and Caribbean Integration Community Development in Mattapan have also received awards from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to support the development and operations of the project.

Bill Grogan, president of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs in the Archdiocese of Boston, was also present at the groundbreaking. Grogan echoed Wu’s sentiment that the development will allow older residents to age comfortably in a safe, stable place.

“We believe strongly in the importance of having a safe and comfortable place to call home for everyone in our community, including those aging in place,” Grogan said. “An affordable place to call home, especially for those who are getting priced out of the City of Boston, will allow our residents to age comfortably within their community of existing supports.”

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(Democratic Gubernatorial candidate Maura Healey walks with elected officials and Lieutenant Governor nominee for Massachusetts Kim Driscoll (2R) as she campaigns on the eve of the US midterm election, in Boston, Massachusetts | Photo by JOSEPH PREZIOSO/AFP via Getty Images)

