

# Tremendous amount of progress in Lynn



## ITEM PHOTO BY OWEN O'ROURKE

State Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash, Executive Director of the Economic Development and Industrial Corp. James Cowdell and Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy look at potential projects at an LEAD team meeting at the Lynn Museum.

## BY THOR JOURGENSEN

**LYNN** — Top officials, including state **Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash**, on Friday said they are going full steam ahead gathering the resources to spark Lynn's resurgence.

A 355-apartment project on the Lynnway, a residential development on lower Washington Street and the **Market Basket** supermarket on Federal Street have advanced since last November, when Ash, **U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton** and **Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy** stood on City Hall's steps with Gov. Charlie Baker to launch the **Lynn Economic Advancement and Development team**.

Ash said Lynn is the envy of 25 other **Gateway cities** in the Bay State where incomes and education levels are below state averages.

"There is not another Gateway city where there is so much development actively that is ready to pop,"

he said. “Tremendous progress has been made since we announced Lynn is a priority for us.” LEAD’s goal is to focus city, state and federal expertise on a dozen projects scattered across downtown and the waterfront. Since November, that effort has included Ash’s meetings with **National Grid** representatives. The utility is the leading owner of oceanside land in the city, said **James Cowdell, executive director of the Economic Development and Industrial Corp.**

Citywide development, including the former **General Electric River Works**, the **Whyte’s Laundry** site on Willow Street and the former Beacon Chevrolet land, where an \$80 million Lynnway apartment complex is planned, offer “similarities and their own unique challenges,” said Ash.

“We’re tackling them one at a time. With each, we are getting closer to development,” Kennedy said. One of the challenges has been linking the 1,100-unit proposed gear plant project to commuter rail service. **State Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack** said she is optimistic that scheduled train stops can be arranged at the River Works stop, now reserved exclusively for GE employees.

An overarching goal in the LEAD discussions is increasing the city’s market-rate housing. **State Rep. Brendan Crighton** said the city and state can combine forces to lure developers with tax credits.

“The only way to attract market housing to Gateway cities is through creative financing,” he said. Crighton and Moulton said talks are underway with GE representatives about opportunities to repurpose River Works land for residences or innovative businesses. “We have a lot of good ideas,” said Moulton. “We need to see them come to fruition.” But not all the news coming out of Friday’s session was good. Don’t expect to sail on the commuter ferry this summer. Pollack said the search continues for money to help the city buy a ferry and to cover operating costs. Thor Jourgensen can be reached at [tjourgensen@itemlive.com](mailto:tjourgensen@itemlive.com).