

GE gearing up for the T

By Thor Jourgensen / The Daily Item | Posted: Friday, April 24, 2015 3:00 am

LYNN — Lynnway landowner Charles Patsios enlisted the state's top economic official and the city's legislators this week in a full-court press to pair his development plans with a public commuter rail stop.

The River Works stop is listed on commuter rail schedules, but it is reserved for General Electric workers who must ask a conductor to allow them off at the stop and then show their employee badge at the stop's turnstile.

Patsios bought the 65-acre GE gear plant property between the Lynnway and the commuter tracks last October and said the stop underscores the value of building a mixed-use development on the site.

He's tentatively dubbed the project, "Lynn Port — A city within a city."

"By the time you can drink a cup of coffee, you're already in downtown Boston," he said.

He discussed including the stop in his plans on Wednesday with state Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash, state transportation officials, Lynn legislators, aides to U.S. Sen. Edward Markey and U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton and city officials, including City Economic Development and Industrial Corporation Director James Cowdell

"Ash is going to work with us," Cowdell said.

Gov. Charlie Baker said Ash, former Chelsea city manager, is working with cities and towns across Massachusetts to "establish a framework for development." In Lynn on Wednesday for a separate event, Baker said he realizes the Lynnway's potential with its "terrific" view of Boston.

"There is certainly an opportunity here. We will move as the community moves," he said.

Patsios said Ash's presence at Wednesday's meeting "shows a commitment from the governor that Lynn is important."

He said MBTA officials are "friendly and receptive" to initial proposals to include the River Works stop in gear plant development plans.



Charles Patsios

Charles Patsios at the railroad that runs by General Electric.

Patsios said he wants to lure “millennials” to an eventual gear plant development with promises of quick public transit access to Boston and living a few minutes away from the waterfront, the commuter ferry, downtown Lynn and Lynn Woods.

“This is going to be an alive and active place; it isn’t a place to come and slow down,” he said.

Patsios said arranging public access to the River Works stop is his top priority as he sketches out development plans. He said Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority officials are “friendly and receptive” to initial proposals to allow residents in a future gear plant site development to use the commuter stop.

“The fact there is an existing stop lowers the bar. It’s on the schedule,” he said.