

Representative Lynch secures \$850,000 in funding for new community center at Mary Ellen McCormack public housing complex

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Boston, MA U.S. representative Stephen Lynch has secured \$850,000 in funding toward the construction of a new community-oriented center to be run in partnership with the YMCA of Greater Boston (YGB) at the Mary Ellen McCormack (MEM) public housing complex in South Boston during its planned \$2 billion redevelopment.

Lynch, who has represented South Boston for 23 years, secured funding for the partnership with YGB during the FY 2024 appropriations process, leveraging a Community Project Funding (CPF) grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's Office of Community Planning and Development.

The new YMCA of Greater Boston facility will be constructed alongside a 17,500 s/f community center to be created through the historic adaptive reuse of the existing boiler plant on the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) property. It will be named for the late William “Billy” McGonagle, a former BHA administrator who grew up at MEM and served BHA for 40 years.

“This funding is critical to building a new YMCA within our community that will help enrich the lives of neighborhood children and families, create a safe space for residents, and promote training and educational opportunities,” said rep. Lynch. “It is also entirely fitting and deeply reassuring that this new facility will be forever associated with our friend, William ‘Billy’ McGonagle, to honor his memory and the wonderful work he did throughout his life on behalf of families living in public housing.”

“As gov. Healey, mayor Wu, councilors Ed Flynn and Erin Murphy and the tenant task force continue to transform the Mary Ellen McCormack Housing into a more welcoming and safe community, it is important to work as a team. I am grateful for the support of Kenzie Bok, BHA administrator, Gilbert Winn, CEO of WinnCompanies, and David Shapiro, CEO of the YMCA of Greater Boston, who will help bring this project to fruition. I am also grateful and proud that my partners, U.S. Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, maintained relentless support to ensure federal funding was included, just as State Sen. Nick Collins and State Rep. David Biele directed state support for local priorities as well,” Lynch said.

“We are deeply appreciative for the funding secured through Representative Lynch’s leadership which will jumpstart the planning, listening, collaboration, and design necessary for a responsive and rooted future Y in South Boston,” said David Shapiro, CEO, YMCA of Greater Boston. “It is a privilege to be a part of this broader transformative redevelopment with innovate partners focused on increasing stability, vibrancy, and all aspects necessary for health and wellness for the Mary Ellen McCormack community and beyond in the broader neighborhood.”

The latest HUD grant for the YGB was among more than \$15.1 million in federal funding that Lynch won for 15 community projects across his congressional district in the recently passed 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act and the Second Consolidated Appropriations Bill. In 2022, Lynch also secured a \$1.75 million CPF grant for the BHA to stabilize and convert the defunct MEM boiler plant building into a community resource for the benefit of MEM residents and their South Boston and Dorchester neighbors.

“Our residents deserve the best programs and opportunities that Boston has to offer, and that is exactly what they will get with the new YMCA,” BHA administrator Kenzie Bok said. “We are so excited about this investment in the families who make Mary-ellen McCormack such a special community and thank Congressman Lynch for helping to make it possible.”

The new community center and Y will deliver unprecedented programs and supportive services to residents, operated by the YGB and other community and non-profit partners. Planned services will include early education and after-school programs, healthcare services, workforce development and senior home care. The effort will be overseen by Connected Communities, a non-profit dedicated to

fostering community-based programs for affordable housing residents, in partnership with the YGB WinnCompanies and the resident-elected and run MEM Task Force.

“The community is incredibly grateful to Congressman Lynch for his continued support of the people who call Mary Ellen McCormack home,” said Carol Sullivan, executive director of the MEM Task Force. “The Task Force is elated for the continued efforts of WinnCompanies and the Boston Housing Authority to bring new partners to our community who are committed to the needs, hopes and dreams of families here. The YMCA of Greater Boston will not only bring a vital amenity to folks here, but also a range of coordinated services, programs, and support as we look to the future.”

In collaboration with the BHA, WinnCompanies will redevelop the MEM community in two phases, delivering 3,300 mixed-income apartments on the 30-acre site, including the replacement of all 1,016 affordable public housing units with a guaranteed right to return for current residents.

“This facility represents the cornerstone of our vision to deliver a community of opportunity to MEM residents and neighbors,” said WinnCompanies CEO Gilbert Winn. “When the history of this redevelopment is written, Congressman Lynch will be remembered for his tireless advocacy to improve the quality of life for this community.”

Phase One of the project was approved by the Boston Planning & Development Agency in mid-December and is in the final permitting and financing stage, with construction expected to begin on the first building later this year.

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