

# Build on the Vision for Downtown Lynn

## Team of Advisors Meeting 2

Tuesday, February 12, 2013, 8:00-9:30am  
Grand Army of the Republic Hall and Museum Building  
56-60 Andrew Street, Lynn, Massachusetts 01901

### Agenda

Continental breakfast provided, compliments of Lynn OECD  
Please sign in!

- 8:00-8:10am: Introductions and updates**  
Team of Advisors Co-Chairs Don Walker (OECD) and Jeff Weeden (LHAND) will kick off the meeting and meeting participants will introduce themselves. The MAPC project team will also provide a brief overview of the project, share the feedback received at and since the kickoff meeting, and update participants on progress.
- 8:10-8:35am: Review of downtown zoning**  
The MAPC project team will share preliminary analysis of the Lynn Zone Ordinance and relevant downtown zoning districts including the Central Business District, Washington Street, Sagamore Hill, and MBTA station areas. Participants will discuss the project team's observations and share their own experiences with the strengths and challenges with current zoning.
- 8:35-8:55am: What will spur equitable downtown development?**  
The project team and participants will discuss what questions should be asked of the audience at the March public forum as well as in other venues, such as in focus groups or interviews.
- 8:55-9:15am: Reaching out**  
How can MAPC ensure that a broad spectrum of perspectives will inform this project's recommendations for Lynn? The project team will share a plan for outreach and ask participants for feedback on potential focus groups, public forums, and people to interview.
- 9:15-9:30am: Open discussion and next steps**

### Save the date:

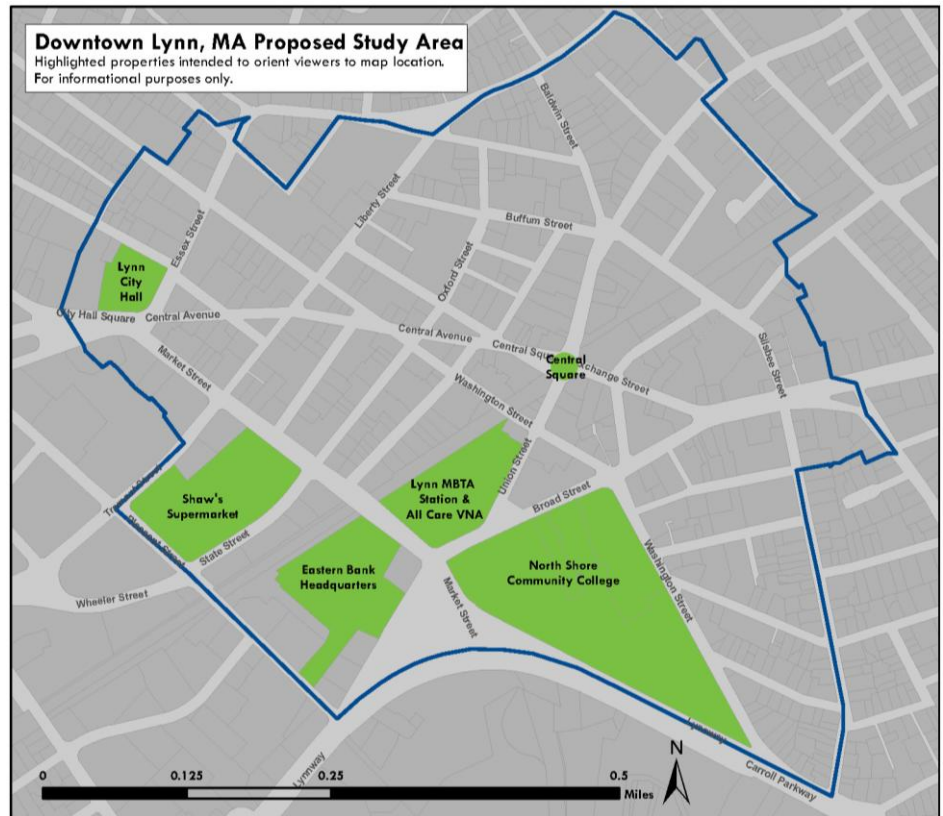
Build on the Vision for Downtown Lynn  
Open House for the Public, 5:00-8:00pm (tentative)  
Location TBD (suggestions welcome!)



# Build on the Vision for Downtown Lynn: Project Overview

**Project mission:** This project will build upon the existing efforts to revitalize Downtown Lynn by providing geographic data, recommending land use and policy changes, and identifying funding and human capital resources that will lead to strategic, high impact reinvestment.

**Project study area:** The project study area includes the entire Central Business District (CBD) per the Lynn Zone Ordinance, as well as the Residential Re-Use Overlay District, the Washington Street Overlay Corridor (WS), and the Sagamore Hill Corridor Overlay District (SHCO). A few adjacent blocks zoned Light Industrial (LI), Business (B), and High Rise Building District (R5) are also included.



## Project outcomes:

**The project will incorporate diverse community perspectives, guided by a Team of Advisors that will:**

- ★ Shape project outcomes by providing feedback at critical intervals during the project timeline
- ★ Reach out to a larger network of community members invested in the future of Downtown Lynn
- ★ Interview community members and host open forums to ensure opportunities for meaningful public input
- ★ Craft a shared vision for the future of Downtown Lynn
- ★ Commit to achieving Downtown Lynn's full potential as a vibrant, diverse, transit-oriented city center

**An interactive property database will make it easier to visualize geographic trends and communicate real estate and investment opportunities in Downtown Lynn. This tool can be used to:**

- ★ Provide funders and investors with a visual representation of strengths and weaknesses of different properties
- ★ Assess acquisition potential of buildings and vacant lots in poor condition
- ★ Identify small businesses or homeowners in need of property maintenance assistance
- ★ Identify positive examples of neighborhood strength
- ★ Identify areas for the creation of new public spaces or small parks

**Recommendations will be established for overcoming barriers to achieving the vision, including:**

- ★ Recommendations for changes to zoning
- ★ Identification of grant funding sources
- ★ Strategies to fund needed resources such as staff positions

[www.mapc.org/downtownlynn](http://www.mapc.org/downtownlynn)



Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is conducting this project with guidance from the City of Lynn Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD) and Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND). Funding provided by the MetroBoston Consortium for Sustainable Communities with a match from MAPC. The project will kick off in the fall of 2012 and is expected to conclude in the summer of 2013. Please contact MAPC Senior Regional Planner Manisha Bewtra, AICP at [mbewtra@mapc.org](mailto:mbewtra@mapc.org) or 617-933-0757 to learn more.

# What will spur equitable downtown development?

For discussion: sample questions to ask community members

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1. I would like to see more residential development in Downtown Lynn.

1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Not Sure 4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

2. I would like to see more mixed-use development in Downtown Lynn with residential, retail and office uses.

1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Not Sure 4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

3. I would like to see more shopping, eating and entertainment options in Downtown Lynn.

1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Not Sure 4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

4. Are you satisfied with the restaurant and cafe options in downtown?

1 Very Satisfied 2 Somewhat Satisfied 3 Not Sure 4 Somewhat Dissatisfied 5 Not Satisfied

5. Do you feel safe walking in downtown during the day?

1 Very Safe 2 Somewhat Safe 3 Not Safe

6. Do you feel safe walking in downtown during the evening?

1 Very Safe 2 Somewhat Safe 3 Not Safe

7. I feel that downtown Lynn offers an attractive, inviting environment for walking around.

1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Not Sure 4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

8. I would like to live in downtown Lynn as it is now?

1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Not Sure 4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

9. I would like to live in downtown Lynn if there were more amenities like parks, places to gather safely, more shops and eating establishments with various price points, streetscape improvements and more.

1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Not Sure 4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

10. Do you think zoning should be amended go make Lynn more attractive and friendly to developers?

1 Yes 2 No 3 Not Sure

11. Should the zoning include design guidelines to better ensure new development complements older and historic structures in the downtown area?

1 Yes 2 No 3 Not Sure

# Reaching out

## For discussion: community outreach strategy and data collection needs

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The overall project timeline is similar to what MAPC has presented before; to be completed this summer. Exact meeting dates are currently in flux – partially due to scheduling challenges, but also due to reevaluation of the strategy. What do you think of the following combination of activities: focus groups, interviews, presentations, forums, and a field survey conducted by volunteers?

#### Recent outreach by MAPC:

- January 15: Presented project overview to Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee
- January 23: Meeting with representatives of OECD, EDIC, Inspectional Services, and LHAND
- January 28: Meeting with Cathy Anderson from North Shore Community College
- January 30: Attended RAW Art Works reception
- February 5: Attended Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner – introduced to Barry Bluestone

#### Potential focus group meetings:

- Local and regional developers
- Real estate professionals and property managers
- Downtown business owners
- Spanish speakers
- Youth
- Arts and culture organizations
- Nonprofit organizations with services downtown
- Downtown residents
- New to Lynn
- Others?

#### Additionally, MAPC can:

- Interview community representatives individually or in small groups
- Attend meetings of community groups, and present at these meetings if invited to do so.

#### Public forums

- March 26 – challenges with date and venue – new proposal: 5-8pm Open House
- At project conclusion – possible dates in June?

#### Volunteers for data collection

- We will ask volunteers to survey conditions of downtown properties in April – ideas for volunteer recruitment?

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## Meeting Notes

### Attendance

The following list represents participants who attended all or a portion of the meeting. These notes are not intended to reflect official positions of meeting participants, rather they are intended to capture the spirit of the conversation and ideas for moving the project forward. Notes by MAPC.

- Christopher Bibby, Bibby Real Estate Corp.
- Bill Bochnak, Lynn Economic Development Industrial Corporation
- Brendan Crighton, Lynn City Council
- Jeff Crosby, New Lynn Coalition
- Gordon Hall, The Hall Company, Inc.
- Corey Jackson, Arts After Hours, Inc.
- Kit Jenkins, RAW Art Works
- Lou Markakis, real estate consultant
- Carly McClain, New Lynn Coalition
- Taso Nikolopoulos, Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce
- John Olson, Columbia Insurance Agency, Inc.
- Don Walker, Lynn Office of Economic and Community Development
- Jeff Weeden, Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development
- Manisha Bewtra, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Marc Draisen, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Matthew Smith, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Emily Torres-Cullinane, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

### Introductions and updates

- MAPC staff started the meeting at 8:15 and presented the meeting agenda.
- Participants introduced themselves.

### Review of downtown zoning (and other discussion)

MAPC staff presented a preliminary analysis of zoning in Downtown Lynn and asked participants to respond to MAPC's initial observations and recommendations.

### Affordable housing

- Corey Jackson mentioned he serves on the Board of Citizens for Adequate Housing.
- Some participants noted that Downtown currently has a surplus of affordable housing.
- Part of the challenge is a need to bring more disposable income into Downtown.
- The percentage of subsidized housing units (out of total housing units) in Lynn (citywide) as of May 10, 2012, according to Massachusetts DHCD's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), is 12.4%.<sup>1</sup> The minimum required under M.G.L. Chapter 40B is 10%.
- MAPC will review the current balance of income-restricted housing and market-rate/unrestricted housing in Downtown Lynn.
- City Councilor Brendan Crighton noted that the income restrictions on some of the current affordable housing in Lynn will be expiring soon, which will impact Lynn's standing on the SHI.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/hd/shi/shiinventory.pdf>



- MAPC staff noted that adding provisions for affordable housing in Lynn’s zoning and planning will help the City to ensure it remains in good standing on the SHI – the ratio changes every time new units are permitted. Additionally, the things that make Lynn unique, such as its diversity and its arts community, may benefit from some protections offered by thinking about and planning for long-term affordability. New development on the waterfront and in other areas could have the positive effect of increasing the City’s tax base – but could also have an impact on affordability.
- 40R Districts require 20% of units in the district to be affordable, along with requirements for mixed use development.

### **Downtown development opportunities, priorities, and challenges**

- The residential reuse overlay successfully resulted in new Downtown residential units.
- All reuse development thus far has been condominiums; no rental units have been developed.
- There is very little opportunity for residential development left in the Central Business District under current zoning.
- Downtown could benefit from increased residential development and density – particularly market rate housing.
- The current commercial market is weak. The commercial tax rate is high.

### **Comments on the Lynn Zone Ordinance**

- The ordinance has contradictions and can be hard to follow.
- Too many uses require special permits.
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) should be supported through zoning changes – the Residential Reuse Overlay and other overlays were a good start, but more TOD could be supported in the Central Business District and other districts surrounding the MBTA station.
- Allowed uses will be reviewed.
- Residential development should be permitted in Downtown as of right.
- Uses could be further separated with different provisions for each. For example, all food service establishments are currently in a single category and all require a special permit in the Central Business District. There could be different provisions for dine-in restaurants, carry outs, drive thrus, and other types of restaurants. Under the current zoning, a coffee shop would be difficult to establish as it would require a special permit.
- One of MAPC’s suggestions was that a summary sheet for the Central Business District could be created to make it easier to understand what is and is not allowed by right. That would

### **Parking**

- There are contradictions in the parking requirements in the current zoning.
- Participants Taso Nikolopoulos and Corey Jackson were recently appointed to the [Off-Street Parking Commission](#). They expressed challenges with parking capacity in Downtown.
- It is difficult to find parking during the day. At night, many lots are closed and not available for parking.
- MAPC staff mentioned recent innovations in parking related to pricing and demand. In nearly every community, parking is always cited as a need, but parking requirements are often excessive. A more effective approach may be to look at the cost and pricing of parking to maximize the investment for each parking space, as well as to increase utilization of available parking spaces.
- One example (not discussed at meeting) – Manisha Bewtra attended the following presentation at the Southern New England American Planning Association Conference in September 2012:

Parking Reform Comes to New England: Turning conventional parking wisdom on its head, see how the lessons of “SF Park” (which adjusts parking prices based on demand) and other West Coast pioneers have been applied successfully in cities and towns in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York, helping to turn perceived parking problems into the tools for downtown improvement and consensus-building. Panelists: Jason Schrieber, AICP, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates; Tom Daniel, AICP, City of Salem, MA; Jay Szklut, Town of Belmont, MA.

- Description: <http://www.sneapa.org/information/previous-conferences/conference-sessions-friday>
- PowerPoint: <http://www.slideshare.net/sneapa/parking-reform-comes-to-new-england>

### **Development Review Process**

- The City needs a more streamlined site plan review process



- The City of Revere, which hosted an Economic Development Summit in October 2012, appears to have streamlined their review process and zoning. At this summit, the City of Revere presented a couple of videos to showcase the City and its development opportunities:
  - [Mayor Dan Rizzo's Economic Development Presentation](#)
  - [Economic Development Summit Revere Flyover Video](#) – done using Google Earth, relatively simple and low-cost to produce but with high impact.
- The City might benefit from a pre-application process.
- The Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, MARPA (which includes MAPC) developed [A Best Practices Model for Streamlined Local Permitting](#) which may provide ideas for how Lynn can streamline its local review process.
- MAPC will also review recommendations made by Northeastern University's Dukakis Center in the *Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool* report for Lynn. MAPC also plans to contact Dr. Barry Bluestone and Dr. Nancy Lee to discuss the overlap between MAPC's work in Lynn and the EDSAT, to see where there is synergy, to coordinate efforts, and to avoid duplication if possible.
- Lynn, like other communities, could become more proactive, rather than reactive, to development proposals. Identifying what kind of development is desired, and following that vision with a process that ensures quick approvals for development that fits the vision, will attract more development.

### **Municipal planning**

- A participant commented that there has not been a City Planner position for 25 years in Lynn. MAPC will research current City and City-affiliated staff roles to better understand what planning functions different departments, divisions, and independent entities have. MAPC will also further investigate previous positions to better understand why there once was a planner position but now is not. With this information, MAPC hopes to make informed recommendations on how the City could enhance its own capacity to conduct long-range, citywide planning.

### **Marketing and branding**

- Who is the market in Downtown? A participant noted that, for example, people who live in Ward 1 are not likely to shop in Downtown Lynn. Similarly, another participant noted that the goal is not necessarily to capture part of Liberty Tree Mall's market share.
- Creating an identity and brand for Downtown Lynn can help with marketing it as a shopping, dining, and entertainment destination. MAPC Executive Director Marc Draisen referenced Vermont as an example – over the past several years, Vermont has spent a lot of effort to create a brand, which has been beneficial in capturing tourist dollars.
- RAW Executive Director Kit Jenkins mentioned that it would be important to connect with the committee working to create a brand for the downtown arts and culture district. MAPC should connect with Kate Luchini from the Lynn Museum, and Martha Almy, the project consultant, regarding this effort.
- There is a lot of positive energy to build on right now. As one participant stated, "Downtown is going to be a neighborhood. Couldn't say that five years ago."
- Downtown could build on existing strengths and its diversity to make it a destination.

### **Transportation**

- MAPC Executive Director Marc Draisen mentioned that he, Senator McGee, and staff from Transportation for Massachusetts met with staff at the *Lynn Daily Item* on February 11 to discuss writing an editorial on the importance of transportation to the economy, jobs, and development in Lynn and throughout the Commonwealth, and for the need to raise new revenue for transportation.
- MAPC, along with several co-sponsor organizations, is hosting a forum about the future of transportation in Massachusetts on Monday February 25 that may be of interest to many participants in this project:
  - North Shore Transportation Forum**
  - Monday, February 25, 2013, 8:30-10:30am
  - Salem Old Town Hall, 32 Derby Square, Salem, MA 01970
  - [More information](#)
  - [Registration](#)
- Marc Draisen encouraged participants to write letters to the editor and contact their State Representatives and Senators to ask that the delegation commit to finding a transportation revenue solution. MAPC has a template letter to use as a starting point – contact [Manisha Bewtra](#) if interested in receiving that.
- One issue in Lynn is that the commuter rail doesn't always stop – express trains bypass Lynn Central Square.

- The commuter ferry will help.

### **Community input and outreach**

MAPC developed a list of potential questions to ask during public forums, in focus groups, or during stakeholder interviews, as well as a ideas for who to reach out to and how – draft ideas were presented as a handout for discussion at the meeting.

### **Demographics**

- The grant funding this project requires that demographic data be collected during all project meetings. A form was passed out for this meeting, and it was suggested that educational attainment could be added as an additional question on the form for future meetings.
- Outreach to underrepresented groups, including but not limited to people of color, is not only desirable to achieve the best results – but is also required by the grant funding this project.

### **Questions to ask community members**

- Generally participants thought the questions were on the right track, though there was little time to discuss them in detail as the meeting was coming to a close. Two suggested additions or revisions were:
  - What are things you don't like about Downtown Lynn?
  - What is working in Downtown Lynn and in nearby neighborhoods?

### **Groups and populations to reach out to (not a complete list)**

- Local and regional developers
- Real estate professionals and property managers
- Downtown business owners
- Spanish speakers
- Youth
- Arts and culture organizations
- Nonprofit organizations with services downtown
- Downtown residents
- New to Lynn
- Dominican community
- Greek community
- Asian community
- Elected officials
- Elderly
- Latino businesses
- Families
- Homeless population

### **Outreach strategy and next steps**

- MAPC will contact some stakeholders for one-on-one or small group meetings
- MAPC is willing to attend meetings of existing groups, and can give presentations about the project to these groups if invited to.
- MAPC will outline and schedule a series of focus group meetings that will target the above listed communities and populations. Team of Advisors meeting participants are invited to help organize these meetings and conduct outreach.
- Don Walker from OECD indicated that he could help provide contacts from businesses and community groups.
- Bill Bochnak suggested reaching out to Mark DeJoie and Heather Hildegard at Centerboard. Additionally, he offered an idea to have meetings for this project be scheduled at times that would complement financial literacy workshops hosted by Centerboard – this may be a way of reaching out to lower income Lynn residents.
- MAPC can reach out to the Lynn Community Health Center – another large Downtown stakeholder.
- Team of Advisors members who participate in the Lynn Business Partnership can connect MAPC with that group.
- As mentioned above, MAPC can reach out to the Arts and Culture District committee.
- MAPC can reach out to the North Shore Latino Business Association.



- Smaller group meetings can make it easier to present content in more than one language.
- Carly McClain mentioned that the format used for the [ILEAD](#) training was engaging, productive, and educational.

### **Public meetings**

- MAPC staff suggested that due to scheduling challenges, perhaps the first meeting could be an Open House and the final meeting could be a more structured Public Forum. MAPC staff asked participants what they thought about the Open House format and what the merits and challenges of each format might be.

### **Open house Format**

- It would be important to get contact information from participants, and to make sure that everyone who comes has the opportunity to ask and answer a certain consistent set of questions so MAPC can leave with data and next steps, rather than having the open house be purely informational.
- An open house could be an effective way to get participation from people who cannot commit to a longer forum.
- An open house could be a good opportunity for networking and mingling – a side benefit for those who attend, such as City Councilors, for example.
- This format could help keep the conversation positive and allow more voices to be heard.
- MAPC could develop an agenda that has some structure – short, timed small group discussions that occur on a repeating basis.

### **Public forum format**

- Flipcharts can be used to capture participant comments.
- The meeting can be video recorded and posted online for anyone unable to attend.
- There was a concern that big meetings often turn into gripe sessions.
- The advantage of public forums is it provides an opportunity for cross-sector, diverse participation. There are strategies to facilitate the meeting to make sure different perspectives are heard, and that everyone is able to participate.

### **Meeting venues to consider**

- Lynn Public Library
- Lynn City Hall
- RAW Gallery Space
- Lynn Museum
- Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development Community Room
- Other venues were suggested at the November meeting as well

### **First public forum/open house meeting date**

- The date suggested – March 26 – is during Passover, and is also the same night as a City Council meeting.
- MAPC will work with Don Walker and others to find an alternate date.

### **Volunteer field survey – downtown property conditions**

- MAPC will work with the Team of Advisors to begin recruiting volunteers to conduct the field survey this Spring. More details to follow.
- The tool that will be used by MAPC will be demonstrated at the [LocalData Lunch Workshop](#) on Tuesday, February 19, at Noon. Participants are invited to attend.

### **Next steps**

MAPC will email the Team of Advisors after this meeting and will post updates to [www.mapc.org/downtownlynn](http://www.mapc.org/downtownlynn). Participants may be contacted to help with outreach and attend additional meetings. Participants are also welcome to contact [Manisha Bewtra](#) with thoughts, questions, ideas, and to schedule meetings.