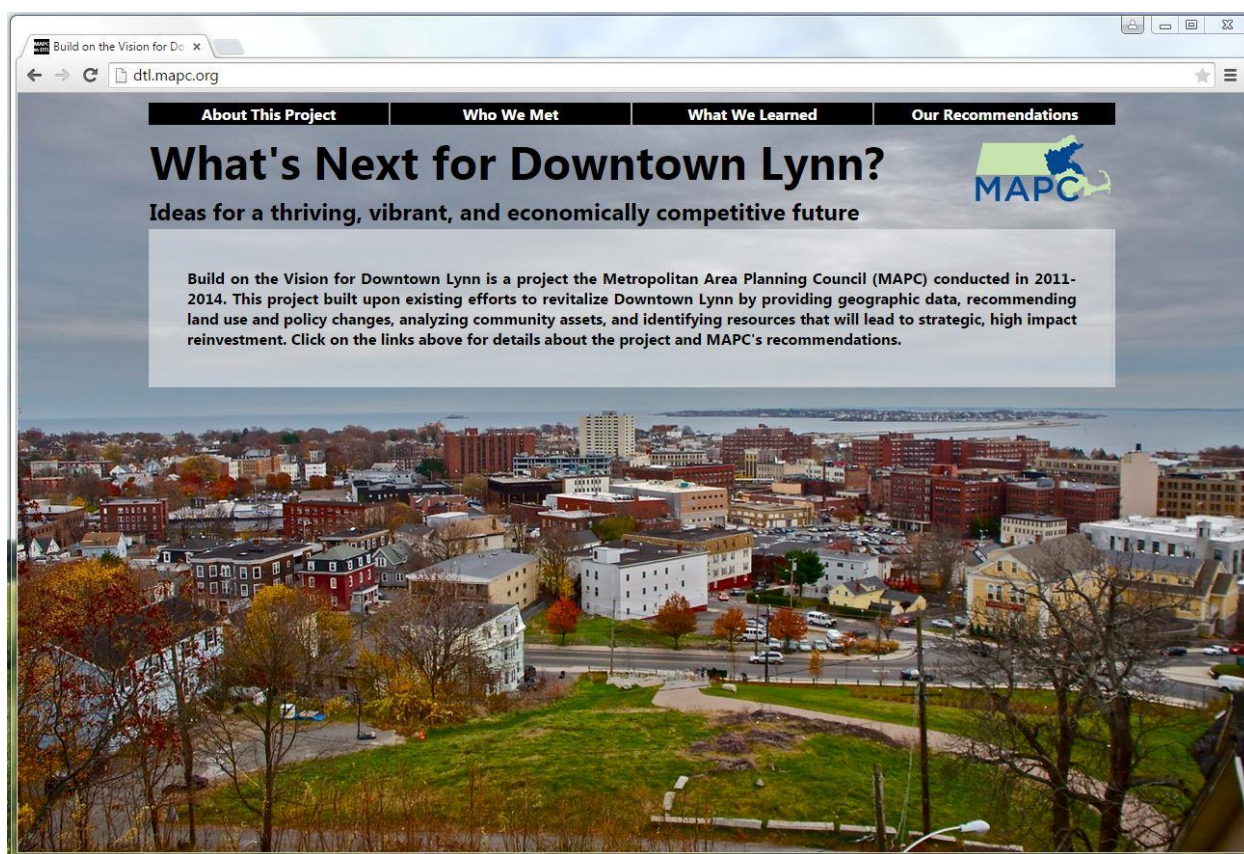


Study 2: Build on the Vision for Downtown Lynn

Build on the Vision for Downtown Lynn is a project the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) conducted in 2011-2014. This project built upon existing efforts to revitalize Downtown Lynn by providing geographic data, recommending land use and policy changes, analyzing community assets, and identifying resources in hopes that the final recommendations would lead to strategic, high impact reinvestment. The project had an emphasis on community engagement and developed a website (<http://dtl.mapc.org>) instead of a final report. Below are the excerpts from the website's community engagement section.



Community Engagement

Community Engagement was a critical component of MAPC's efforts to build on the vision for Downtown Lynn. We learned about Downtown Lynn and its needs by convening a project Team of Advisors, conducting interviews with community leaders, giving presentations to community-based organizations, attending community events, talking with people we encountered on the street or at local businesses, interacting with community members using social media such as Facebook as well as via email, collecting land use and property data using local volunteers, and by hosting two public forums in Downtown. We know we did not meet everyone with something to share about the future of Downtown Lynn, but our hope is that this targeted approach gave us an informed perspective to guide our recommendations.



Photos by James K. Lindley, from the May 23, 2013 Open House and Public Forum held at the Lynn Museum.

Team of Advisors

The project's Team of Advisors met three times: on November 21, 2012, February 12, 2013, and April 10, 2013. The City of Lynn Department of Community Development, Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development, and MAPC identified community leaders that could provide diverse, informed perspectives on Downtown Lynn quality of life, land use planning, and real estate development issues. Meetings were held on weekday mornings. Membership on the "Team of Advisors" was loosely defined; outreach was primarily by invitation, but participation was open to anyone with interest. Not all who were interested were able to attend meetings; we incorporated their input through one-on-one or small group interviews. Participants who attended one or more of these meetings are listed below, along with links to meeting notes, presentations, and other materials.

Team of Advisors Co-Chairs:

- [City of Lynn Department of Community Development](#): Director of Project Operations Don Walker (Team of Advisors Co-Chair)
- [Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development](#): Planning and Development Specialist Jeff Weeden

Team of Advisors Meeting Participants:

- Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy, [City of Lynn Mayor's Office](#)
- Jamie Cerulli, Chief of Staff, [City of Lynn Mayor's Office](#)
- James Cowdell, Executive Director, [Lynn Economic Development and Industrial Corporation](#)
- William Bochnak, Project Coordinator, [Lynn Economic Development and Industrial Corporation](#)
- Michael Donovan, Inspectional Services Chief and Building Commissioner, [City of Lynn Inspectional Services](#)
- Ralph Sevinor, [Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce](#) Immediate Past Chairman, Founder and President of [Wayne Alarm Systems](#)
- Taso Nikolakopoulos, [Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce](#) Vice Chairman and [Government Affairs Committee](#) Chair, Owner and President of [John's Roast Beef and Seafood](#)
- Lou Markakis, real estate consultant and Producer/Host, North Shore 100, [BostonNorth.tv](#)
- Christopher Bibby, [Bibby Real Estate Corp.](#)
- Gordon Hall, President and CEO, [The Hall Company, Inc.](#) Real Estate Owners, Managers and Developers
- John Olson, President, [Columbia Insurance Agency, Inc.](#)
- Kit Jenkins, Executive Director, [RAW Art Works](#)
- Catherine Anderson, Special Assistant to the President, President's Office, [North Shore Community College](#)
- Daniel Cahill, Councilor At Large (2012-2013), [Lynn City Council](#)
- Brendan Crighton, Ward 5 Councilor (2012-2013), [Lynn City Council](#)
- Carly McClain, New Lynn Organizer, [New Lynn Coalition](#)
- Jeffrey Crosby, President of the [North Shore Labor Council](#), [New Lynn Coalition](#)
- Steven Godfrey, Executive Director, [Community Minority Cultural Center](#) Community Development Corporation
- Corey Jackson, President, Managing Director, and Producing Arts Director, [Arts After Hours](#) and [DowntownLynn.com](#) blog founder
- Julie Menendez, Senior Member Services Representative, [Community Credit Union](#)
- Steven Smalley, Legislative Aide, [Office of Senator Thomas M. McGee](#)

Team of Advisors Kickoff Meeting, November 21, 2012: The first Team of Advisors meeting included an overview of the project and initial analysis of Downtown Lynn, including MAPC's review of previous plans and tax assessment data. For more information, please review the [invitation](#), [agenda](#), and [notes](#) and click through the [slideshow](#) and [presentation](#) shown on the right.

Team of Advisors Meeting 2, February 12, 2013: The second Team of Advisors meeting included a discussion of the city's zoning and development needs, as well as discussion about community engagement strategies for the project. For more information, please review the [agenda](#), [discussion materials](#), and [notes](#) and the [presentation](#) shown on the right.

Team of Advisors Meeting 3, April 10, 2013: The third Team of Advisors meeting included an update on who MAPC had met with to date and shared highlights about what we heard from those we interviewed regarding community leadership and coordination, development successes and challenges, Downtown assets and challenges. We also discussed the upcoming Downtown Lynn Data Walk. For more information, please review the [meeting agenda and notes](#) and the [presentation](#) shown on the right.

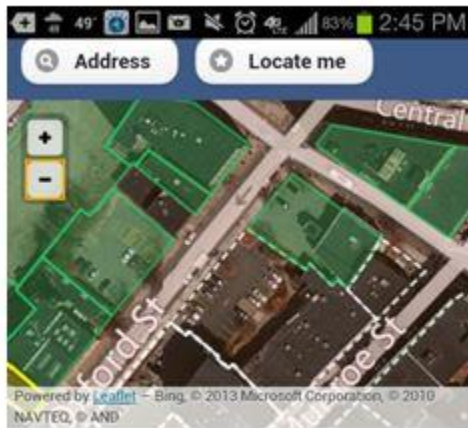
[Downtown Lynn Data Walk](#)



Downtown Lynn Data Walk participants pose for a group photo outside Centerboard in City Hall Square.

On Saturday, April 13, 2013, the MAPC project team invited volunteers to assist with the Downtown Lynn Data Walk.

Volunteers, including a high school youth group from Reading, Downtown Lynn residents, a real estate developer, and a land use data aficionado who drove down from New Hampshire to help out, got to participate with MAPC in a piloting a smartphone/ tablet application called LocalData which they used to collect information on property and lot conditions within the Downtown Lynn study area. This event was publicized by the [Downtown Lynn Neighborhood Association](#), on the [DowntownLynn.com](#) blog, on the [Without Borders Magazine Facebook page](#), on the [Code For Boston meetup](#) page, by email and phone to the Team of Advisors and a group of North Shore Community College staff students, and via its own [Facebook invitation](#). Participants met at [Centerboard](#) and were given an overview of the field survey questions, trained in how to use the application, and broke up into four groups to cover the entire Downtown study area. It was a cold day for mid-April, and in about four hours, the volunteers surveyed about 330 parcels, or 75% of the study area. MAPC finished surveying the remaining parcels over the next few weeks.



189 Oxford St

Choose one or both options below to describe this parcel.

This parcel includes a building.

This parcel includes a yard, garden, park, parking lot, or vacant lot.

The outside of this building:

Is well-maintained.

Screenshot of what survey participants would see on their smartphones or tablets while surveying a property, provided to MAPC by Data Walk participant Will Ward.

Questions in the Downtown Lynn Parcel Survey:

Choose one or both options below to describe this parcel.

- A. This parcel includes a building.
- B. This parcel includes a yard, garden, park, parking lot, or vacant lot.

A. If "This parcel includes a building." is selected:

A1. The outside of this building (select one):

- Is well-maintained.
- Needs repairs or maintenance.
- Is vacant and boarded.



Example of the real-time information a survey administrator (in this case, MAPC) can see when logged into the survey on a desktop computer.

A2. Are any of the following visible on this building? (select all that apply):

- Flower box
- Mural or other artwork
- Peeling or faded paint
- Broken or cracked windows
- Bars on windows
- Tinted windows
- Boarded windows or doors
- Obvious structural damage (such as water-damaged wood, cracks in façade)
- Red pipe for indoor sprinkler system

A3. The ground floor use for this building is currently (select all that apply):

- An office
- A restaurant, bar, or cafe.
- A theater, museum or other entertainment/tourism venue
- A convenience store or grocery store
- A retail shop (electronics, apparel, discount goods, fabric, crafts, other)
- A spa or salon
- A laundry facility or dry cleaner
- A bank or credit union
- A gas station
- An auto repair, service, supply, or sales shop or showroom
- A school or daycare
- A hotel/lodging facility
- A residence
- A church/place of worship
- A parking garage
- Vacant
- None of the above

A3.1. If "A restaurant, bar, or cafe." is selected: Does this food service establishment have seating?

- Yes.
- No, it is carry-out only.

A4. Does the building include (select all that apply):

- Signs written in English
- Signs written in languages other than English

A5. How many non-permanent signs are visible from the front of this building (on the outside of the building or inside windows)?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 or more

A6. This building has a (select all that apply):

- For sale sign
- For rent sign
- For lease sign
- None of the above

B. If "This parcel includes a yard, garden, park, parking lot, or vacant lot." is selected:

B1. This is (select all that apply):

- An unpaved lot with no landscaping/greenery.
- A landscaped lot, lawn, garden, or park with little to no pavement.
- A playground with equipment such as a jungle gym or swings.
- A paved lot that does not appear to be for automobile parking.
- A parking lot.

B1.1. If "A parking lot." is selected: Who is the parking for? (If the lot has sections for different users, select all that apply).

- Employees only
- Residents only
- Customers
- Anyone can pay to park here.
- Anyone can park here for free.

B2. Pavement on this lot:

- Is well-maintained.
- Needs repairs.
- Not applicable -- this lot does not have pavement.

B3. Landscaping on this lot:

- Is well-maintained.
- Needs attention.
- This lot does not include any greenery.

Open House & Public Forum

On Thursday, May 23, 2013 the MAPC project team held an Open House and Public Forum at the Lynn Museum. MAPC, the Team of Advisors, and other community leaders reached out to dozens of individuals, groups, and organizations to raise awareness about the project and to invite them to the event. MAPC flyered several Downtown businesses with flyers in [English](#) as well as [Spanish](#). MAPC also reached out by directly contacting those who had already participated in the project, using a [Facebook invitation](#) as well as sending information by public post or private message to several Lynn-related Facebook pages and personal profiles of individuals we had connected with. Thanks to support from many community leaders, information was posted in community newsletters and magazines. The Facebook event invitation was also a place to host a conversation about ideas for Downtown Lynn online.

The [agenda](#) included an "Open House" which featured **refreshments from Downtown Lynn businesses**: Dominican food from [Rincon Macorisano](#) and cupcakes from [Cakes by NeeNee](#), an **opportunity to view the exhibits** at the [museum](#) and **minge with other participants**, and a **gallery of posters and participation stations**. The posters featured data and maps about Downtown Lynn demographics, community assets, transportation networks, zoning regulations, property conditions, and public and private investments made in Downtown. Alongside these posters were tables set up with brown paper, markers, and sticky notes with questions about what's next for Downtown Lynn. Participants were invited to share their experiences and opinions about what they envision for Downtown, using the information presented on the posters to prompt conversation and commentary. MAPC staff were available at the participation stations as well as floating around the room to collect quotes from participants. MAPC also hired Spanish-language interpreters to facilitate participation in all aspects of the meeting for Spanish speakers.

The more structured portion of the evening's agenda, the "Public Forum," opened with **words of inspiration** from Lynn's own spoken word and hip-hop artist, [Walnut-da Lyrical Geni](#). Walnut invited participants to use this opportunity to "come closer": to get to know one another, to explore and understand the data, and to get involved in building a better Downtown Lynn. Following his performance, Project Manager Manisha Bewtra introduced key aspects of the project and led the audience through a **series of questions using electronic polling devices**. Each audience member was given their own device to answer questions about themselves, as well as questions about Downtown and its future, and results of everyone's responses were immediately displayed so participants could get a sense of who else was in the room and what they were thinking.

Walnut performed again to "rap it up," and participants were again asked to visit the participation stations and provide additional comments if they wished to do so. View the two presentations on the right to see what participants had to say.

About 40 people attended this event, and more than a third of these participants had not previously met any MAPC staff or participated in any events related to this project. Similarly, about a third of participants were not very familiar with previous and current planning efforts such as the Waterfront Master Plan, Washington Street/Sagamore Hill Gateway District Plan, Downtown/Market Street Vision Plan, the Northeastern Economic Development Self Assessment Tool, the Downtown Lynn Cultural District, or recent local investments and zoning changes. Another third indicated they were only somewhat familiar.

Participants included Downtown residents (22%), residents of Lynn who live outside Downtown (46%), and people who live outside Lynn (32%). The audience included renters and homeowners, with a variety of ages, professional backgrounds, and household income levels. More than half of the audience owned property and businesses in Lynn. Three-quarters of the audience identified as white, and 17% identified as Hispanic or Latino. Similarly, more than three-quarters of the audience primarily speak English at home and about 16% speak Spanish at home. While participation at the meeting seemed to represent diversity in terms of household income, homeownership, property and business ownership, and professional affiliations, the composition of the audience was less racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse than the community.

For graphs showing the results of each keypad polling question, click through the [audience participation presentation](#) shown above. **A few highlighted results** regarding Downtown's the experience of visiting Downtown, needed amenities, and types of development desired are included below.

Community assets: Participants identify some of Downtown Lynn's assets as its arts and culture scene, variety of restaurants, multicultural diversity, historic architecture, the commuter rail, and variety of restaurants. They identified many specific destinations and other [community assets](#) as well.

Walking environment and safety: Participants generally feel safe walking in Downtown during the day, and most feel somewhat safe during the evening. But more than half of the participants do not think that Downtown Lynn offers an attractive, inviting environment for walking around. In another question, 38% of participants answered that the amenity Downtown needs most is more attractive streets, sidewalks, buildings, and lots.

Things to do in Downtown: Besides more attractive streets, sidewalks, buildings, and lots, 29% of the audience identified "more dining and entertainment options" as the amenity Downtown needs most, and 21% identified "activities and destinations for families" as the amenity Downtown needs most. 94% of the audience wanted to see more shopping, eating and entertainment options in Downtown Lynn, and want to see this area become a regional entertainment, dining, and shopping destination.

Would you live in Downtown? Two-thirds of the participants would not like to live in Downtown the way it is now. If Downtown had more amenities, however, 56% indicated they would like to live there, and only 25% of the audience said they still would not like to live in Downtown.

Types of development needed: Three-quarters of the participants said they would like to see more residential development in Downtown Lynn, while 22% were not sure and 3% of the participants

disagreed. Nearly all participants, 94%, said they would like to see more "mixed use" development with retail, office, and residential combined.

Barriers to revitalization: Participants identified the following as the biggest barriers in the way of a thriving future for Downtown: "Not being able to attract people to spend their money here" (27%), "The perception people have of Lynn" (21%), "Regulations and politics make new development harder" (21%), and "Empty buildings and environmental hazards" (21%).

Reasons that the audience selected for why they attended the event were: because they are really excited about Downtown's future (45%), they want to participate in a civic process (28%), they want to get involved in neighborhood activities (14%), they want to start a business or renovate property (10%), or they want to meet new people (3%).

Interviews, Presentations, & Events

Community Interviews, Presentations, and Events: In addition to Team of Advisors meetings and other project events organized by MAPC, the project team gave presentations about the project at events organized by other groups and interviewed several individuals and organizations on their perspectives regarding the future of Downtown Lynn.

Presentations at events organized by others:

- January 15, 2013: Presentation to the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee
- April 25, 2013: Presentation at the DTL Cultural District Community Collective
- May 15, 2013: Bilingual (Spanish and English) presentation at the North Shore Latino Business Association General Meeting

Interviews and small group meetings with the MAPC project team:

- September 12, 2012: Carly McClain, New Lynn Coalition Organizer
- January 28, 2013: Cathy Anderson, North Shore Community College Special Assistant to the President
- February 12, 2013: Phone conversation with Chris Bibby of Bibby Real Estate Corporation regarding real estate and development in Lynn, following the second Team of Advisors meeting
- February 21, 2013: Mark DeJoie, Heather Hildebrand, and Roxanne Nealon at Centerboard
- February 21, 2013: Seth Albaum, Founder and President of the Downtown Lynn Neighborhood Association and Editor of LynnHappens.com
- February 21, 2013: Martha Almy, consultant who developed the Downtown Lynn Cultural District branding initiative
- March 3, 2013: Martha Almy and Lynn Museum Executive Director Kate Luchini
- March 11, 2013: Phone meeting with Dr. Nancy Lee from Northeastern Dukakis Center to discuss the work she, Dr. Barry Bluestone, and their team have done in Lynn.
- March 20, 2013: Julie Menendez, Community Credit Union

- March 22, 2013: Corey Jackson, President, Managing Director, and Producing Arts Director, Arts After Hours and DowntownLynn.com blog founder
- March 26, 2013: Joy Winkler, Lynn resident and former North Shore Community Development Corporation Community Organizer
- March 28, 2013: Reverend Jane Gould, St. Stephen's Memorial Episcopal Church
- March 28, 2013: Frances Martinez, President/CEO of the North Shore Latino Business Association
- April 4, 2013: Executive Director Lori Abrams Berry, Marketing and Communications Manager Cynthia Steger-Wilson, and Community Relations Manager Debbie Smith Walsh at the Lynn Community Health Center
- May 17, 2013: Marc Draisen and Manisha Bewtra met with members of the New Lynn Coalition

Impromptu interviews and meetings:

- November 5, 2012: Met Phil Ouellette, *The Daily Item* General Manager and other *Item* staff
- November 5, 2012: Met Jason Cruz, RAW Art Works Clinical Supervisor and toured RAW gallery
- November 5, 2012: Met with Charlie and Dotty Christopoulos at Charlie's Junction Deli
- February 12, 2013: Met Bob Matthias, Building Curator at the Grand Army of the Republic Museum. Bob gave the project team a tour of the facility following the Team of Advisors meeting held there.
- February 23, 2013: Met Wig Zamore at an event in Somerville and learned more about environmental contamination concerns at the former Hawthorne's restaurant site
- March 15, 2013: Met Matt O'Neil, Blue Ox Chef/Owner while dining at the restaurant, which included a brief conversation about the project
- March 15, 2013: Met Carly McClain and Jeff Crosby at the New Lynn Coalition office
- April 4, 2013: Met staff at the Gordon College satellite office in Downtown Lynn
- April 4, 2013: Met staff of the Lynn Public Library and followed up with correspondence to the library director
- April 13, 2013: Met Bernie Quintanilla, owner of Bernie's Place, following the Downtown Lynn Data Walk
- May 15, 2013: Met Kimberley Luck at Girls, Inc. and toured facility
- May 15, 2013: Met Zimman's staff and manager
- May 15, 2013: Met Lupita's restaurant staff and manager
- May 15, 2013: Met Shaw's supermarket manager
- May 15, 2013: Met Bernie Quintanilla at Bernie's Place again
- May 15, 2013: Met Basilio Encarnación, owner of Rincon Macorisano
- May 17, 2013: Met Saif Yousif, Manager, and other staff at Baghdad Convenience Store

Community events the MAPC project team attended:

- January 30, 2013: RAW Art Works "They Look Like Me" reception, where Manisha Bewtra and Emily Torres-Cullinane met RAW staff Shelby Morrison and Masiel Encarnación as well as youth and young professionals interested in getting more involved in local events and civic participation.
- February 5, 2013: Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner
- March 28, 2013: RAW Art Works Career Night

- May 5, 2013: Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee Meeting
- November 13, 2013: Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee Meeting

Meetings with municipal partners and local officials: In addition to Team of Advisors meetings, the project team had numerous meetings with our municipal partners and local officials to update them on our progress and to get their feedback regarding the direction of the project. This list represents most of the meetings MAPC had with the City of Lynn Department of Community Development (formerly called the Office of Economic and Community Development or OECD), Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND), the Mayor's Office, the Inspectional Services Department, the Economic Development Industrial Corporation (EDIC), and Lynn City Councilors. Some additional communications such as email correspondence and phone conversations are not included.

- August 16, 2011: MAPC Senior Regional Planner and Project Manager, Manisha Bewtra, met with James Marsh and Don Walker from OECD and Jeff Weeden from LHAND to develop project scope of work and to tour Downtown Lynn
- October 3, 2011: Manisha Bewtra and MAPC Land Use Division Director Mark Racicot met with James Marsh, Don Walker, and Jeff Weeden at Lynn City Hall to further define scope of work
- February 7, 2012: Manisha Bewtra met with James Marsh, Don Walker, and Jeff Weeden to finalize the project scope.
- March 27, 2012: Prior to approval of the project scope by the Metro Boston Sustainable Communities Steering Committee, MAPC Executive Director Marc Draisen and Project Manager Manisha Bewtra met with Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy at Lynn City Hall.
- April 11, 2012: Scope of Work approved by the Metro Boston Sustainable Communities Steering Committee
- May 11, 2012: MAPC Economic Development Manager and Interim Project Manager Steven Winter met with Don Walker and James Marsh at Lynn City Hall
- August 30, 2012: Manisha Bewtra met with City of Lynn Director of Special Projects Donald Arthur at MAPC
- September 12, 2012: Manisha Bewtra met with Don Walker, Jeff Weeden, Don Arthur, and From Mills to Main Streets (another Metro Boston Sustainable Communities project) coordinators Marcia Hohn from the Immigrant Learning Center and Juan Carlos Ferrufino from Ferrufino Consulting & Associates.
- October 11, 2012: Manisha Bewtra and MAPC Senior Community Engagement Specialist Emily Torres-Cullinane met with Don Walker and Jeff Weeden at Lynn City Hall
- November 5, 2012: Manisha Bewtra, Emily Torres-Cullinane, and MAPC Research Analyst Clayton Martin visited Downtown and met with Don Walker and Jeff Weeden to plan Team of Advisors Kickoff meeting
- November 21, 2012: Team of Advisors Kickoff Meeting. Don Walker helped with outreach for this meeting and the City provided refreshments.
- January 23, 2013: Meeting with Mike Donovan, Don Walker, Jeff Weeden, Bill Bochnak
- February 12, 2013: Team of Advisors Meeting 2. Don Walker helped coordinate the meeting at the GAR museum and the City provided refreshments.
- February 22, 2013: Manisha Bewtra and Emily Torres-Cullinane met with Ward 5 Councilor (now Councilor-at-Large) Brendan Crighton, who also worked in the Office of Senator Thomas M. McGee.

- March 7, 2013: Manisha Bewtra and MAPC Senior Regional Planner Matthew Smith met with LHAND Director of Planning and Development Norm Cole, Neighborhood Development Manager Peggy Phelps, and Jeff Weeden at LHAND office.
- April 10, 2013: Team of Advisors Meeting 3. Don Walker helped coordinate the meeting at Lynn City Hall and the City provided refreshments.
- May 17, 2013: Manisha Bewtra met with Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy and Mayor's Chief of Staff Jamie Cerulli
- May 23, 2013: Manisha Bewtra spoke with Council President Tim Phelan on the phone
- May 23, 2013: Open House and Public Forum
- June 25, 2013: Manisha Bewtra and Marc Draisen met with Mayor Kennedy at Lynn City Hall
- August 22, 2013: Manisha Bewtra, Emily Torres-Cullinane, Matt Smith, and Mark Racicot met with Mayor Kennedy, Jamie Cerulli, James Marsh, Don Walker, Norm Cole, Peggy Phelps, Jeff Weeden, Jim Cowdell, Mike Donovan, and LHAND Executive Director and EDIC Chairman Charles Gaeta at City Hall to discuss preliminary recommendations, need for additional outreach, and plan for completion.
- September 3, 2013: Manisha Bewtra, Matt Smith, Mark Racicot, and Marc Draisen met with Lynn City Council President Tim Phelan at City Hall to share project details and discuss additional outreach to City Councilors.
- January 14, 2014: Final presentation of project at Lynn City Hall, coordinated with help from the Mayor's Office.