

BUSINESS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

LYNN GETS \$55K TO REVITALIZE THE DOWNTOWN

BY [ADAM BASS](#) | December 15, 2021

LYNN — A \$55,000 grant from MassDevelopment will enable the city to invest in revitalizing MBTA viaducts located downtown and forming a redevelopment plan for the former Whyte's Enterprise Laundry site on Willow Street.

The grant, announced on Monday by MassDevelopment — the state's development and finance agency and land bank — will direct \$5,000 for viaducts owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the majority of the funding, \$50,000, to the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Lynn (EDIC/Lynn) for the formerly contaminated laundromat site at 83 Willow St.

The projects are aimed at helping local businesses grow, and utilizing the revitalization of these spaces to bring in more commercial opportunities.

Both projects will take two to four months to complete, and each will begin with public meetings held between January 2022 and early spring. Funding for each program will come from the awarded grants and will not go beyond the amount awarded.

For the Willow Street project, Bill Bochnak, the project coordinator of EDIC/Lynn, said that he and his team are contacting consulting groups and architecture firms such as Dream Collaborative, LLC about the development plan. He noted that EDIC has not made a final decision on which company will conduct the study, but said that Dream Collaborative is the group they have talked to the most.

Bochnak said the goal of repurposing Whyte's Enterprise Laundry is to put the site back on the tax roll.

"Whyte's is a location we have looked at for over a decade," Bochnak said. "It will be a productive use (of space) to repurpose this empty lot next to the post office and it will have better usage."

Bochnak noted that there has not been a decision on what will be built on the lot, and it will be up to the public and consulting groups to figure out what is best.

"We will be looking at site condition and zoning analysis publicly," Bochnak explained. "The result will depend on future use."

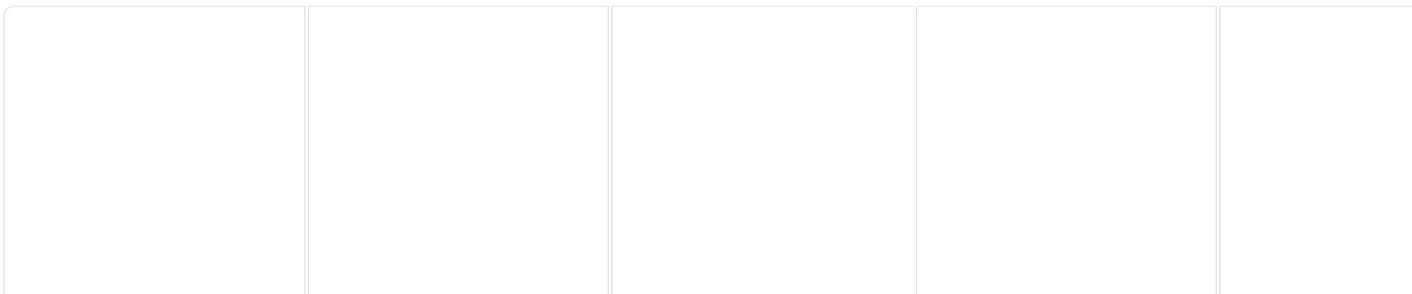
The other \$5,000 of the \$55,000 award will focus on promoting the usage of the viaduct space under the MBTA Commuter Rail tracks for potential vendors or events.

Lauren Drago, associate planning director for the City of Lynn, said the city has been looking to repurpose the viaducts for years.

"We wanted to activate them over a decade ago," said Drago. "We talked about putting a stage, calling in vendors or asking if it was possible to put a restaurant there."

Drago said the biggest obstacle for planning this repurposing of the viaducts was that the MBTA was focused on other finances at the time. She said the MBTA is now interested in making station investments, thanks to money provided by the American Rescue Plan Act and the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, and it would be the perfect opportunity to get to work on the viaducts.

"This is a January-to-spring timeline," Drago said. "This will be a piece of a longer process. The job right now is looking at station improvements so we can use these spaces."



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