

EDUCATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

# REGION ON THE REBOUND: COMMUNITIES BOUNCING BACK AFTER PANDEMIC

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BY ANTHONY CAMMALLERI | June 16, 2022

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LYNN — Government officials gathered for bacon and eggs in the upper ballroom of the Knights of Columbus Wednesday morning for the 2022 Greater Lynn Chamber of Commerce State of the Region Breakfast Forum.

Among Lynn's representatives was Mayor Jared Nicholson, and Economic Development and Industrial Executive Director James Cowdell. In Nicholson's address, he spoke briefly about Lynn's need for a new school amid a rising downtown population.

"The Pickering school that's in the headlines is addressing one of the top needs that's in our community," he said, referencing the ongoing rebuild of the 106-year-old school. "An explosion in the number of students, which the Lynn Public Schools have done a commendable job in handling. In some ways, if you take a step back, it's a really strong advertisement of what we do in the Lynn Public Schools, that so many families want to trust in our public system."

Nicholson spoke primarily about infrastructure, citing improving public transportation, reconstructing Western Avenue, and potential affordable housing developments as key priorities for the city moving forward.

"One of the top issues facing our residents is the cost of living. Close to half the city is cross-burdened by housing, and we owe it to those folks to come up with solutions. It's an issue that goes beyond the city plan. It's regional, in some ways, it's national, but it's also a huge issue for our residents, so we're interested in implementing the Housing Lynn Plan to make progress on that issue," Nicholson said. "We also want to take that kind of planning and strategizing we have for housing and bring that to workforce development so that we're giving our residents the skills they need to thrive in our economy."

At the end of his address, Nicholson commended the city's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Faustina Cuevas, praising her for positively affecting everything that goes on at City Hall, and for her role in expanding language access at City Hall.

During Cowdell's presentation, he announced a plan to construct a large waterfront park at the landfill alongside the Lynnway.

"We don't want these silos of development to happen while these projects get developed. We want to create neighborhoods reflective of the community. We want to have greenspace for the community," Cowdell said. "The view will be incredible. We're going to transform the landfill into a regional park, and we will do that with the State Mass Development and the city of Lynn."

The forum concluded with an announcement from Swampscott Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald that the town had purchased 9.5 acres of land across Archer Street, along with the current site of the Hawthorne by The Sea restaurant.

"This was not easy, but it was certainly important. When we look at the waterfront in Swampscott, having public spaces and places is so important to our quality of life," Fitzgerald said.

The purchase was authorized at a Tuesday night Town Meeting, where members voted overwhelmingly to give the go-ahead for the \$9 million sale.

*Anthony Cammalleri can be reached at [anthony@itemlive.com](mailto:anthony@itemlive.com).*