

BUSINESS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

TRANSFORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN LYNN'S FUTURE

BY [ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN](#) | February 17, 2022

LYNN – The Baker-Polito administration has selected 12 districts, including Lynn, for its historic expansion of the [Transformative Development Initiative \(TDI\)](#).

This initiative, which started in 2015, is a MassDevelopment program for Gateway Cities designed to accelerate economic growth.

All districts will be assigned TDI fellows – who will be MassDevelopment employees – to provide on-the-ground, economic-development expertise and collaborative leadership in these cities over the next three years.

The districts will also have access to a range of tools to help accelerate development including technical assistance, grants to support local market development and arts and cultural infrastructure, collaborative workshops, resources and events.

Lynn also received a TDI grant in 2015, with a fellow working with the city from 2016-19, which City Planner Aaron Clausen said yielded a very successful outcome and put a significant focus on the downtown.

“We’ve seen a significant amount of private investments and revitalization,” Clausen said. “This gives us an opportunity to take a step back... and look at economic development from a slightly different perspective and how it can support small businesses downtown but expand that district boundary in the city.”

Union to Exchange Street is going to be part of the TDI district this time around, focusing on ways to address economic-development equitably to support the current businesses and attract new ones in that area.

“In doing so, we can prevent or limit as much displacement of some of these existing businesses,” Clausen said. “Union Street is a vibrant, active street, and we just want to accentuate that and support them going forward... You can go there and get food from all over the world, so we want to build on that and support it.”

The announcement more than doubles the size of the program, which currently operates TDI districts in five Gateway Cities and has invested \$23.7 million over three years.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to add to the team supporting equitable economic development in our downtown,” said Mayor Jared Nicholson. “The Union Street corridor in particular will benefit from this additional resource to build on the growing activity there.”

Since 2015, MassDevelopment has invested \$20 million in TDI districts through tools including technical assistance, real-estate investments, grant programs, and fellows working in the districts.

That investment has led to more than \$100.2 million in public and private investments in the districts.

“Gateway Cities are home to one-of-a-kind businesses, institutions, and communities that anchor regional economies across the commonwealth,” said Gov. Charlie Baker. “Our administration was proud to launch MassDevelopment’s Transformative Development Initiative in 2015 as a mechanism for stimulating economic growth, and we’re excited to now expand this proven program’s reach in more than a dozen cities.”

MassDevelopment’s TDI creates partnerships in commercial districts in Gateway Cities to engage community members, implement local economic-development initiatives, and encourage further public and private investment.

Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Lynn (EDIC/Lynn) Executive Director James Cowdell said this announcement is great news.

“This will bring resources into Lynn to help spur economic development,” Cowdell said. “Aaron Clausen and the Planning Department were instrumental in Lynn being chosen.”

Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, who also serves as chair of MassDevelopment’s board of directors, said this collaborative, street-level approach “engages community members to advance small businesses, activate public spaces, rethink vacant properties, and more.”

“By developing coalitions of local public, private, and nonprofit partners to make progress toward shared neighborhood goals, MassDevelopment’s Transformative Development Initiative has become a proven model for accelerating economic development in Gateway Cities across Massachusetts,” said Kennealy.

Clausen said they are expecting a fellow to start working with the city to spearhead an action plan by the end of the year.



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