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Beyond Walls

Lynn, Massachusetts

A public art and lighting initiative in the
heart of a former industrial city



Warren Jagger

Overview

Submitted by: Beyond Walls
Completed: Ongoing
Total Development Cost: \$913,592

Located just north of Boston on the Atlantic coast, Lynn, Massachusetts, was once a thriving manufacturing center. Dubbed the “shoemaking capital of the world” in 1885, the city attracted immigrants who worked in its tanneries, shoe factories, and early electric industries. However, like other post-industrial urban areas, after World War II, Lynn began to struggle as production began to decline and manufacturing moved elsewhere.

Now, as regional growth fuels investment in surrounding communities, the city—a 10-minute commuter rail ride from Boston—is experiencing renewed interest and development. Its downtown was one of the first in the state to be designated a Massachusetts Cultural District, and in 2014, Lynn was named one of 10 pilots for MassDevelopment’s Transformative Development Initiative, which engaged the community in planning efforts to increase vibrancy and economic development downtown.

Inspired by these initiatives and mural programs in other cities, North Shore resident Al Wilson started Beyond Walls in 2016 as a volunteer effort to reactivate downtown Lynn through public art installations.

“Beyond Walls is a wonderful example of the power of arts-focused tactical urbanism to bring vitality and beauty to the urban landscape.”

— 2019 Selection Committee

By May 2019, the now independent 501(c)3 nonprofit had produced two citywide mural festivals, resulting in 42 large-scale murals by renowned local and international street artists, and mounted 11 vintage neon sign installations along with creative lighting displays under three commuter rail underpasses.

The initiative is generating widespread interest fueled by special events and tours. The 2017 festival attracted more than 5,000 visitors and 4.5 million social media impressions, prompting other organizations in the region to engage Beyond Walls for similar art installations in their own communities.

The \$913,592 project was made possible through significant philanthropic, corporate, and in-kind support from local individuals, businesses, and organizations including the City of Lynn, the Barr Foundation, the Boston Foundation, and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. The architecture firm Payette, the architectural lighting design firm Lam Partners, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Port Lighting Systems offered pro-bono design and installation services.

Beyond Walls is currently expanding its work into public space development. Later in 2019, the organization planned to launch four downtown “parklets” and develop a new concert venue and public park on three acres of open space on the city’s waterfront.

“There is now a sustained downtown energy of visitors taking in these pieces as well as residents rediscovering their own backyard through art experiences,” said Joseph Mulligan, Lynn’s MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative Fellow. “Ultimately, this has led to a change in perception, and the public views Lynn in a more favorable light.”



Murals, lighting installations, and arts-related events are drawing people back to downtown Lynn.



MELIAM TRAVEL & TAX SERVICE

VAR

Project at a Glance

- Public art and lighting installations in downtown Lynn, Massachusetts, a working-class, former industrial city on Boston's North Shore.
- Multiple projects including 42 large-scale murals created by renowned artists as part of Beyond Walls Street Art Festivals; "Lynn Lights" underpass lighting; "RetroLit," the installation of 11 vintage neon signs in downtown public spaces; and "42," the conservation of a 1942 GE I-A jet engine.
- An ongoing initiative by an independent 501(c)3 that seeks to reactivate and revitalize downtown Lynn.

Project Goals

- Strengthen the community by activating downtown spaces through creative placemaking.
- Improve the perception of Lynn through investment in the downtown public realm.
- Increase pedestrian safety and economic activity downtown with the introduction of new lighting and public art.
- Produce visible, high-quality murals that reflect the culture of the community by engaging locally, nationally, and internationally renowned artists.
- Attract media attention to change the narrative around Lynn.

Chronology

1629

Area previously inhabited by the Naumkeag people is incorporated as Saugus by British colonists.

1838

The Eastern Railroad opens between Salem and East Boston with a stop in Saugus.

1850

Part of Saugus becomes the City of Lynn, which becomes a fashionable summer resort for Boston residents.

1880–1920

Lynn's immigrant population grows to one third of the city's population, a percentage that remains consistent through 2019.

1970s

The Eastern Railroad line is acquired by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) for commuter rail service.

1981

Lynn's last shoe factory closes and a fire destroys 17 buildings downtown, contributing to the city's slow decline.

2009

Studies indicate that a disproportionate amount of crime and vehicle/pedestrian accidents in Lynn occur at railway underpasses.

1800

1900

2000

1635

The first leather tannery and shoemaking operation opens in Lynn, initiating an industry that grows over time to make the city the "shoemaking capital of the world" by 1885.

1845

Frederick Douglass writes *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* while living in the area.

1860

New England shoemakers strike in Lynn to protest reduced wages.

1892

General Electric Co. is founded with headquarters in Lynn and Schenectady, NY.

1972

Plans for constructing Interstate 95 through Lynn are altered, preserving its downtown.

1990s

The City of Lynn dissolves its municipal planning department as a cost-cutting measure.

1996

The Diamond Historic District is established in Lynn by the National Park Service, naming 590 structures that include Victorian homes and a Quaker meeting house.

2014

MassDevelopment selects downtown Lynn as one of the first 10 districts in the state to take part in the new “Gateway Cities” program.

2016

January: Al Wilson leaves his job in technology to focus on developing a public art project in Lynn.

April: MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Fellow Joe Mulligan begins working in Lynn.

November: Wilson signs an agreement with Neighborhood Development Associates, Inc., the nonprofit arm of the Lynn Housing Authority, to act as a fiscal partner for Beyond Walls.

December: Wilson applies for a license with the MBTA to install LED lighting in three underpasses, executes a three-year loan agreement with a collector for 11 neon signs, and receives a verbal commitment from GE that it will donate a 1942 jet engine.

2018

May: Beyond Walls is formally incorporated as a 501(c)3.

June: “Lynn Lights” is installed on three MBTA Commuter Rail underpasses. The dedication ceremony attracts approximately 500 attendees.

August: Beyond Walls’ second Street Art Festival is held, resulting in 27 additional murals.

November: Construction begins on 10 Monroe, a 10-story, 250-unit market-rate apartment building in downtown Lynn, the first ground-up, market-rate construction in decades.

2012

The Massachusetts Cultural Council names downtown Lynn, long occupied by the Lynn Museum/Lynn Arts (established 1897) and RAW Art Works (established 1988), as one of the first state-recognized arts and cultural districts.

2015

MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiatives (TDI) partners with the Lynn Economic Development and Industrial Commission, Lynn Housing and Neighborhood Development, the Hall Companies, and the City of Lynn to develop its *Downtown Action Strategy*.

2017

March: The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades DC 35 agrees to prime walls for the murals and provide lift operation training and certifications for all of the mural artists.

April: Beyond Walls hosts a fundraiser at the Lynn Museum to launch its first Patronicity crowdfunding campaign.

July: Beyond Walls’ first Street Art Festival produces 15 murals in downtown Lynn.

November: Beyond Walls is engaged as a consultant on a fee-for-service basis to produce a mural with French artist Eltono on IDEO’s new Cambridge headquarters.

2019

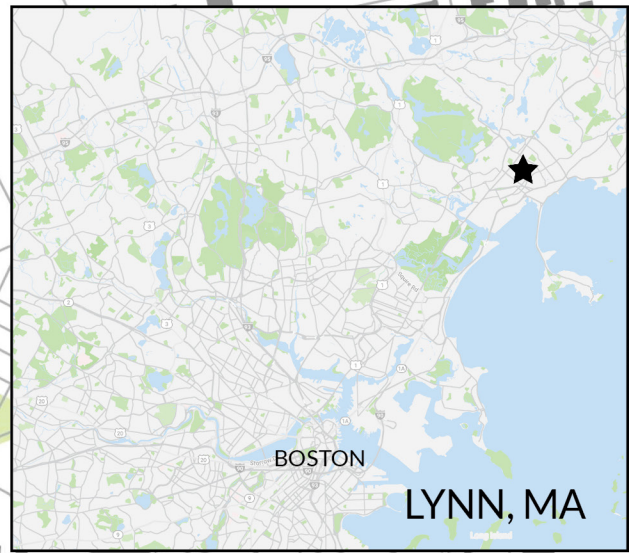
July 22–August 3: The third Street Art Festival is held, generating 15 additional murals.



POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1. Central Square - Lynn
MBTA Commuter Rail Station
- 2. Lynn Museum
- 3. RAW Art Works
- 4. One Mighty Mill
- 5. 10 Monroe

- Vintage Neon Signs
- Underpass Lighting
- 2017 Murals
- 2018 Murals



Project Description

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Walls is a placemaking initiative that produces street art, lighting, and other public space installations in Lynn, Massachusetts. The project, which began as a volunteer-run effort spearheaded by area resident Al Wilson in 2016, became an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in 2018 and by early 2019 had a full-time staff of three. It has produced dozens of creative interventions within a relatively short period of time and learned many lessons along the way. As of May 2019, the organization had produced 42 large-scale murals painted by street artists from around the globe, installed creative lighting in three underpasses in downtown Lynn, and mounted 11 vintage neon signs throughout the downtown area, along with restoring a jet engine manufactured by General Electric.

Beyond Walls describes its mission as “to activate space to strengthen community.” After completing two mural festivals and several lighting installations, the organization began expanding its work into public space development. Beyond Walls planned to mount a third mural festival, launch four “parklets” (conversion of on-street parking spaces into public spaces),

and develop a new concert venue and public park on three acres of open space on the Lynn waterfront in 2019.

CONTEXT

With an estimated 2018 population of 94,654, Lynn is the State of Massachusetts’ ninth largest city. On the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and on a commuter rail line, the city—just 3.7 miles north of Boston and a 10-minute train ride from downtown—is actively working to reinstate commuter ferry service. Lynn has historically been working class and continues to be the largest and most ethnically diverse town on the North Shore (the stretch of coastal communities north of Boston).

The area known today as Lynn was originally inhabited by the Naumkeag people. A territory encompassing what is now Lynn and other neighboring cities was incorporated as Saugus in 1629, and the City of Lynn was incorporated in 1850. Around this time, Lynn became a fashionable summer resort destination for wealthy Boston residents. The area also



The historic waterfront city has long been a gateway for immigrants.

began industrializing with two co-located and connected industries: shoe manufacturing and electricity. When General Electric was founded in 1892, its first two factories were built in Lynn and Schenectady, New York. This early history is responsible for much of the city's architecture downtown as well as the homes now listed in the National Register Diamond Historic District.

Lynn's proud union and working-class heritage is central to its identity. One of America's largest and earliest strikes took place in the shoe factories of Lynn in 1860, where at the time 234 shoe factories produced more than a million pairs of shoes each day. Jan Ernst Matzeliger, the son of an enslaved African woman in Suriname (then Dutch Guiana) and a Dutch colonial industrialist, had immigrated to the United States and to Lynn and went on to invent one of the first machines that greatly increased shoe production. He died at the age of 37 of tuberculosis and is now memorialized in one of the murals produced by Beyond Walls. Unions and other organizations that advocate for labor rights continue to play a strong role in the city's politics and culture.

Since the late nineteenth century, Lynn has also been known for its ethnic diversity. Frederick Douglass, the famous abolitionist who freed himself from slavery, settled in the part of Saugus that became the City of Lynn in 1841 and wrote his most famous work, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, there. Waves of immigration between 1880-1920 brought the city's immigrant population share to one-third, including Polish and Russian Jews, Greeks, and French-Canadians¹. Later at the end of the twentieth century, Lynn's Latinx community and Cambodian population began to grow. These trends have continued. Over 60% of students in Lynn public schools are now Latinx, with first- and second-generation immigrant families hailing from the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and many other South and Central American countries. Lynn's Cambodian population is one of the largest in

¹ Unless otherwise noted, references to race, ethnicity, and nationality throughout this case study reflect the terminology used by the source. In instances where there is no direct source, we have attempted to use the most inclusive, accurate, and appropriate language possible.

the country and is very well-organized politically; the city's first Black and Cambodian city councilors were recently elected, bucking the trend of a majority white political leadership.

Lynn's overall demographics are substantially less homogenous than other towns in the region and in the state overall. In 2014, over 30% of Lynn's population was foreign born, and 43.6% of the city identified as non-Hispanic White, 11.2% as non-Hispanic Black or African American, 34.3% as Hispanic/Latinx, 7.6% as Asian, and 3.3% as other. The Hispanic/Latinx population in Lynn is a much larger percentage of the population than the statewide average of 17.5%. According to census estimates, the non-Hispanic White population is decreasing and Black or African American, Asian, Hispanic or Latinx, and multiracial groups are increasing. Over 45 languages are said to be spoken in Lynn public schools.

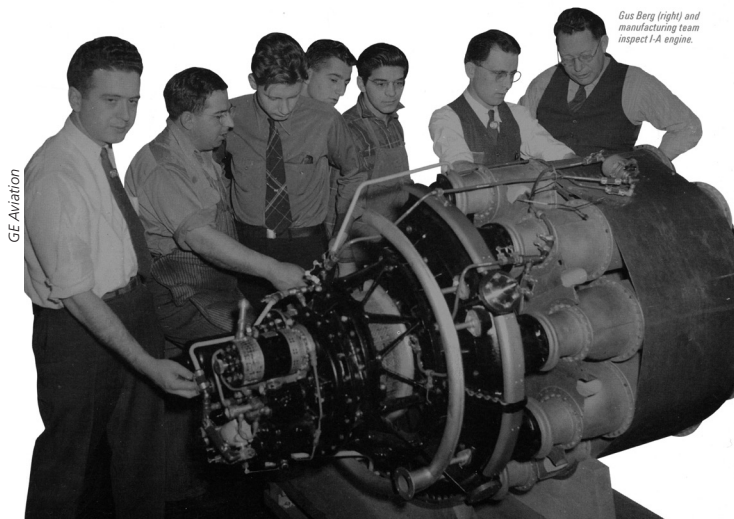
Economic Challenges

Like many other postindustrial cities around the world, Lynn's communities, its built environment, and its civic infrastructure have been negatively affected by global and regional economic fluctuations. Lynn qualifies as a Gateway City, which is Massachusetts' term for the 26 mid-size regional urban centers in the state that traditionally served as "gateways" to economic mobility but whose populations now have lower-than-average incomes and lower-than-average education attainment. The loss of its manufacturing and electric industries in the mid-twentieth century left the city without a stable local tax base, and the decline of federal and state support for municipalities beginning in the 1970s compounded this problem. The development of malls and investment in highways cut Lynn off from surrounding areas and further contributed to its downtown's decline. Bars and clubs replaced many of the daytime enterprises, and Lynn began to develop a reputation for crime, leading to the jingle "Lynn, Lynn, City of Sin." Over the past 10 years, however, Lynn's crime rates have been declining, and most believe the reputation to be unfounded.

Also, like other older industrial cities, Lynn is beginning to see the impact of the demographic and economic changes of the last two decades. The growth of global real estate investment, for example, and the interest of wealthier



The city's industrial heritage is showcased in the Lynn Museum.



General Electric built one of the first jet engines manufactured in the US in Lynn.

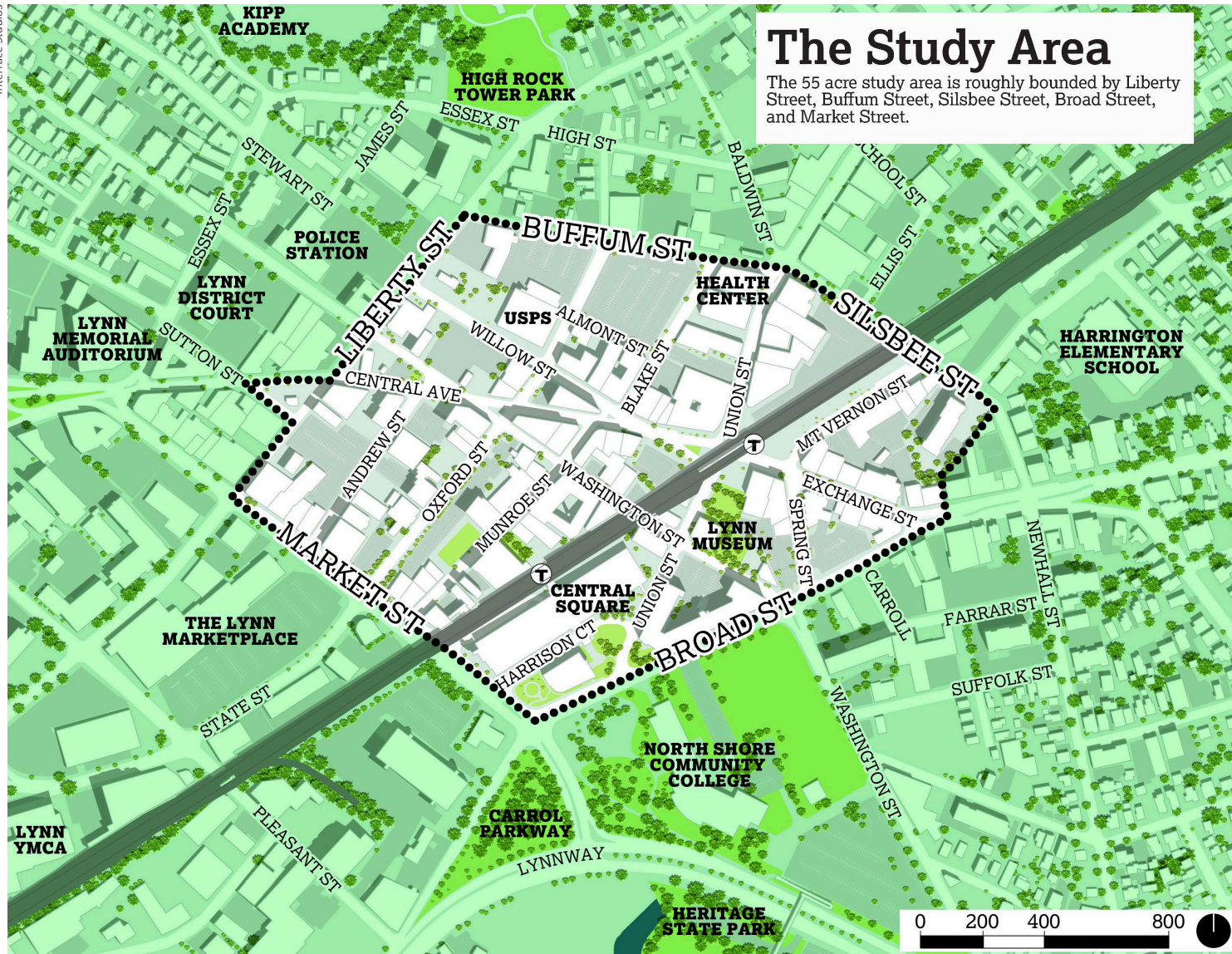
populations in moving back to cities is putting pressure on the Boston region's housing market, which includes Lynn.

Despite being Massachusetts' ninth largest city, Lynn's government has struggled with significant structural budget deficits. While the city lost much of its commercial and industrial tax base between the 1970s–2000s, its number of residents continues to grow, putting additional pressure on public schools, policing, trash collection, and other civil services. Federal and state contributions to municipal budgets on the whole have declined since the 1970s, leading many elected officials to consider local economic development as one of the only ways to increase the city's tax base.

These conditions also contribute to a sense that the City of Lynn is difficult to navigate for those trying to make change, especially those groups that have been historically underrepresented and marginalized from institutionalized power. The strong majority of city leaders are non-Hispanic White and of the baby-boomer generation, thus not representative of current demographics. Over 30% of the city residents are recent immigrants—which, under the current political climate and an increasing number of raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, creates an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. Many racial, cultural, economic, and geographical divides sometimes create tension amongst various populations in Lynn.

The regional housing crisis impacts Lynn's residents intensely and unevenly. Lynn's overall vacancy rate is about 2%, and North Shore towns provide very little subsidized affordable housing. As of 2015, only 3.7% of housing stock in Lynn's neighbor to the north, Swampscott, was affordable subsidized housing, a percentage mirrored in other neighboring towns of Marblehead and Nahant. In addition, those qualifying for Section 8 are being priced out of Boston—all adding to the pressure on Lynn. According to PolicyLink, 56% of Lynn's renters are low income, and 78% of those low-income renters are cost-burdened by housing, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on their housing. A 2016 study commissioned by the Lynn Housing Authority showed that 12.5% of the city's housing stock is low- or moderate-income subsidized units, with more than half concentrated downtown.

Interface Studios



Downtown Lynn was the focus of a MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiatives Program (TDI) planning study.

Like many urban areas in the United States, the city is somewhat segregated by race and income. According to StatisticalAtlas.com, the census tracts northwest of downtown are predominantly non-Hispanic White with median household incomes over \$50,000, while areas in and closer to the core are more diverse (Hispanic, Black, Asian, and non-Hispanic White) with median household incomes between \$20,000 and \$30,000. The downtown census tract is currently the poorest in the city and home to many nonprofit social service organizations and subsidized housing units.

Planning and Development

Planning efforts in Lynn, as in many other postindustrial cities, are fragmented and under-resourced. As a cost-cutting measure, Lynn's municipal urban planning department was dissolved in the 1990s. There is no formal permitting process for large events or public works projects, and no design review process for new development. The Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, the regional planning agency, completed a review of Lynn's zoning code in 2014 and concluded that it is confusing, contradictory, and in great need of an overhaul. City leaders have brought in planning, design, and policymaking organizations as consultants and advisors for various recent planning initiatives, and several nonprofit organizations have commissioned independent planning studies. While these efforts have produced noticeable improvements, the lack of a centralized planning department has slowed the overall pace of change.

In 2014, Lynn was selected as one of 10 pilot cities for the launch of MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiatives (TDI) program. MassDevelopment is a statewide economic development agency offering lower-cost financing and funding programs. The TDI program is specifically designed for Gateway Cities to encourage development activity in downtown districts. Along with the promise of direct equity investments in real estate and other financing mechanisms, TDI pays the salary for a three-year fellow to be based and work solely in each city and provide ongoing technical assistance. Lynn's fellow is Joe Mulligan, who in spring 2019 was concluding his fellowship after being granted a one-year extension.



TDI Fellow Joe Mulligan helped connect people and organizations with resources to foster economic development in Lynn.

In 2016, the City of Lynn rezoned several downtown parcels to allow a 10-story as-of-right housing development. This made possible the first high-rise market-rate housing in downtown, which was under construction in 2019. In the same year, the Lynn Housing Authority commissioned a housing study by national economic and real estate consultant RKG Associates that, among other things, noted the potential for economic displacement to accelerate given the likelihood that those getting priced out of nearby towns would seek housing in Lynn. The study recommended that the city increase its internal planning and zoning capacity, preserve affordability for all residents, put low-income residents at the center of neighborhood revitalization, and catalyze market-rate development. Several other studies and analyses commissioned by civic organizations were published in 2016–7, including a community health needs assessment by MIT's NextShift Collaborative, which details recommendations that could help address health disparities within the city and emphasizes the need for a long-term strategy to retain and promote affordable housing, with special consideration for renters

and low-income households most likely to experience negative health and economic conditions related to displacement.

Current development in Lynn has become the subject of debate in the city, following regional, statewide, and national trends. For example, Lynn United for Change, a community-based organization founded in the wake of the 2008 foreclosure crisis, expressed concerns regarding development and displacement in a 2016 flyer, stating, “We are not opposed to development, but we [...] don’t want rising rents and homeownership costs to displace our family members, our neighbors, and our small businesses.” Affordable housing advocates criticize the City of Lynn for allowing and sometimes providing tax incentives for new developments that offer few units of affordable housing. City officials counter by citing the need for market-rate development to boost tax income for the city’s growing budget and sometimes describe Lynn as already having enough subsidized units. In addition, community development organizers, mayors in Boston-region cities, and others are advocating for the housing crisis to be addressed on a regional and state-wide level.

While several nonprofit developers are building affordable housing in nearby towns and cities, so far, none of them have built in Lynn. The city’s own housing agency, which is under the same leadership as the city’s economic development agency, has been the sole developer of affordable housing in the city. This agency recently completed a new mixed-income housing project called Gateway North, which added 71 units, 53 of which are considered affordable based on the area median income. The project opened in 2018.

In early 2019, several large, new market-rate housing projects were under construction or contract along the waterfront, transforming what has up until recently been a light industrial and retail strip mall area. Meanwhile, planning was underway to try to address new development in the area, including an update to the 2007 waterfront master plan by Boston-based Utile and an *Open Space Master Plan* completed by landscape architecture firm Brown, Richardson + Rowe. The latter establishes a vision for balancing new residential and commercial development with green space for the public and climate resiliency. These two plans will inform an update to the 2010 *Municipal Harbor Plan*.

Creative Placemaking

Placemaking generally refers to place-based tactical projects such as bike lanes, small parks, and pop-up vendors that focus on physical changes, building connections and a sense of belonging, and human-centered design. Nationally, interest in place-based, human-oriented development is growing. Beyond Walls’ founder Al Wilson was inspired by several well-known placemaking projects, including the High Line in New York City and King’s Cross in London, as well as public mural arts projects such as the Philadelphia Mural Arts program and Wynwood Walls in Miami. Beyond Walls staff report that the organization has been greatly influenced by the Project for Public Spaces, a national placemaking advocacy and technical assistance organization.

Beyond Walls identifies itself as a creative placemaking initiative. While many assert that all placemaking is creative, the term “creative placemaking” was coined in a 2010 white paper commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and a set of private foundations seeking to build a comprehensive planning field around arts-driven community development, increase funding for the arts, and demonstrate the powerful role and contributions that artists and cultural practices have always played in community building.

National creative placemaking trends have evolved over time. In response to growing concerns that these initiatives are unintentionally fostering gentrification and displacement, some leaders in the field, including Roberto Bedoya and Maria Rosario Jackson, have called for the need to address racial and economic equity more explicitly. Bedoya suggests framing the practice as “place-keeping” or “place-belonging” and ensuring that existing residents are engaged in the process of imagining and making. Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, one of the authors of the initial white paper, dispelled the myth that “artists are the shock troops of gentrification” but acknowledged that arts and culture are not neutral and called for artists and creative placemakers to carefully examine their role and potential complicity in inequitable development. ArtPlace America Executive Director Jamie Bennett describes the current focus on creative placemaking as “artists as allies in equitable community development” with a focus on long-term, grassroots, creative strategies led by those most marginalized by the status quo economy.

Lynn's existing artistic communities and initiatives helped lay the foundation for Beyond Walls. The city was designated as one of Massachusetts' first cultural districts in 2012, thanks to several longstanding arts and cultural organizations. Located in the heart of the cultural district, the Lynn Museum was founded in 1897 as a local heritage organization and has grown to incorporate the Galleries at LynnArts, an arts-based collaborative that showcases and supports area artists. RAW Art Works, a nationally renowned youth arts center offering free programs focused on art therapy, was established in 1988 and opened a downtown arts center in 1994. Beginning in the 1980s, artists such as Temp and Relm and others began painting and tagging, or creating graffiti named-based art, throughout the city's many walls, underpasses, and more. Their work was featured in Caleb Neelon's book *A History of American Graffiti*, and both were commissioned to create murals for Beyond Walls.

Street Art and Economic Development

Mural festivals are an outgrowth and one evolution of the street art movement, which most cite as beginning in the 1970s in New York City and encompasses often unsanctioned public art like graffiti, wheatpasting, stenciling, and more. Mural festivals—which typically invite a similar set of international artists to one location for a week or two to paint multiple murals at once—are popular around the globe, especially in cities that support the arts and seek to attract outside visitors and investment. Famous mural festivals occur each year in Montreal, Canada; Long Beach, California; Bristol, United Kingdom; Taupo, New Zealand; and Detroit, Michigan. Typically, these festivals feature murals rooted in street-art style graffiti that often utilizes spray paint, breaking from the longer history of public murals commissioned by institutions and painted by renowned studio-based commercial artists. Either way, these festivals can create value for cities by attracting new businesses and development.

In some recent cases, such as the Spotify offices at the new Freedom Tower in downtown Manhattan, street artists were given space to create art that ultimately helped to market the building, but they were not compensated. This has sparked questions among artists and others engaged in creative placemaking about the relationship between public art—especially “street



The City of Lynn was designated as one of Massachusetts' first cultural districts.



Mural festivals are used by cities across the globe to attract visitors and investment.

Interface Studios



Over 175 people participated in two community meetings held to gather input.

Creative Collective MA



Participants expressed interest in public art and lighting commuter rail underpasses.

art”—and real estate development. While many artists appreciate the increased visibility, impact, and, in some cases, funding that comes with these opportunities, some are uncomfortable with the idea that their investments of creative talent and energy are translating into large financial windfalls for developers.

Public art and placemaking projects can have significant economic impact and cultivate civic power. Who benefits from these projects can depend on their goals, leadership, process of development, curatorial choices, and more. Many murals and public art projects are funded and led directly by communities of color, lower-income communities, and the organizations working for their benefit. For example, the Punto Urban Art Museum in Salem, another North Shore community, was started by residents of public housing as a cultural preservation and heritage project and has produced 75 large-scale murals by many renowned international and local artists. The organization that currently hosts the project, North Shore Community Development Coalition, is collecting data to understand the economic impact of the murals on public housing residents and hopes to capitalize on its art works to address larger social justice issues. Other examples include the Village of Arts and Humanities (2001 Rudy Bruner Award Gold Medalist), an artist-engaged equitable community development organization in Philadelphia, and Mission Economic Development Association’s partnership with Galeria de la Raza in San Francisco. Artists who work in the public sector and in partnership with community development projects often take into consideration who is leading the project and who will benefit from it.

PROJECT HISTORY

Beyond Walls’ first public installation, the 2017 mural festival, happened just 18 months after founder Al Wilson quit his job in the technology industry to focus on this work as a full-time volunteer. Wilson had been living in New York City but maintained a residence on Boston’s North Shore since 2014 to be near his family. Initially interested in developing a shipping container project on the waterfront, Wilson began asking his local connections for help finding the right contacts in Lynn. He also began learning about arts-driven development initiatives through a talk by Mark Davy, founder and CEO of Futurecity, a London-based culture and placemaking consultancy, at the

Boston Society of Architects. A mutual friend who worked for Senator Elizabeth Warren introduced him to Lynn native Drew Russo, the executive director at the Lynn Museum and Lynn Arts, who in turn connected him with other local leaders. Wilson shifted his plans away from the waterfront after learning that MassDevelopment, residents, and business owners were focused on improving areas of the downtown. Additionally, waterfront plans were mired in several planning studies and hotly contested among the various property owners. Instead Wilson began developing the idea for a street art festival and lighting projects focused on activating downtown.

Wilson's initial inspiration and motivation related to an interest in large-scale public street art. He was excited by projects like Mural Arts Philadelphia; Arts Projects of Kings Cross, London; and Wynwood Walls in Miami, a project led by developers who created a large, free outdoor gallery of street art by commissioning internationally renowned artists. The area, a former industrial and working-class residential neighborhood called Little San Juan, has since been rezoned to mixed-use and become one of Miami's premier arts destinations. Wilson had also read about the Lynn Economic Advancement and Development Team (LEAD), which launched in late 2015 as a cross-governmental working group to promote economic development in the city. In April 2017, he was quoted by the news site Wicked Local saying that Beyond Walls' mission was to "improve the lives of people who live and work in Lynn now and to target millennials who are becoming priced out of traditional housing markets like Allston and Brighton," with the goal of bringing businesses, jobs, and market-rate development to the city. Beyond Walls' mission has evolved over time and is now described as "activat[ing] space to strengthen community," reflecting growing clarity about its goals and the larger impact of its work.

During the spring of 2016, as Wilson was beginning to formulate his ideas, MassDevelopment's TDI held community meetings to gather ideas about improving Lynn's downtown. The two May 2016 Downtown Action Strategy community meetings, hosted by TDI and attended by over 175 people combined, were facilitated by Interface Studio, a planning firm from Philadelphia. In line with TDI's theory of change, the meetings focused on asking participants what kinds of small interventions in the downtown district could

have a big impact. Recommendations from the process included the following:

- grow existing and attract new small businesses
- activate and improve public spaces
- engage and partner with local residents, community organizations, businesses, and municipal agencies
- connect with anchor institutions (academic, medical, corporate)
- eliminate vacant storefronts
- facilitate development of underutilized properties, particularly for market-rate housing

During the meetings, community members indicated a desire for better wayfinding, street grids, sidewalks, public spaces, and crosswalks; lighting under the commuter rail underpasses; more businesses/attractions; and other improvements. They also expressed an interest in arts and cultural events and public art installations.

Wilson began working on a plan to illuminate the underpasses closest to the commuter rail stations to increase pedestrian safety and to make a more welcoming environment for residents and evening visitors, encouraging commuters passing through Lynn to stop there for dinner on their way home. Throughout 2016, he navigated the bureaucracy of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA), notorious for its culture of "no" and opacity, to understand what permissions would be necessary to illuminate the commuter rail line underpasses. After getting the lighting permit approved and raising funds for its implementation, Wilson was informed that any project would need to carry an additional, prohibitively expensive insurance policy covering a potential train derailment, even though the lighting would only impact the underside. Finally, in July 2017, Wilson lined up a call between Congressman Seth Moulton and Brian Shortsleeve, the head of the MBTA at the time, resulting in the waiver of the insurance requirement.

In 2017, with lighting approvals in place, Wilson convened a volunteer committee of 28 people who live and work in Lynn and surrounding communities to help advance the project. He received fiscal sponsorship from the city's Neighborhood Development Agency, an arm of the Lynn Housing Authority. Around this time, he met architect Parke MacDowell from

Payette, a Boston-based interdisciplinary architecture firm, who had worked on a proposal to revitalize a highway underpass in Boston. MacDowell convinced firm partners, who were initially skeptical, to allow him to donate design services, initially in the form of a visual rendering of the proposed underpass lighting and later construction drawings. MacDowell brought Dan Weissman, his friend from Harvard Graduate School of Design, and Lam Partners, an architectural lighting firm where Weissman is a director, on board. Ron Kuszmar, vice president at Port Lighting Systems, saw the rendering on a Facebook invitation for an April fundraising event and got in touch to offer his services. Kuszmar then contacted Philips Color Kinetics, which offered to donate the hardware and materials necessary for one lighting installation.

With visuals of the proposed lighting in hand and permission for three underpass installations, Wilson focused on fundraising. He organized a kickoff event on April 6, 2017, at the Lynn Museum. The event was critical in launching the project, helping to make the case for its value and secure local support. Wilson applied for MassDevelopment's Commonwealth Places program, which partners with the crowdfunding site Patronicity to fund community-based public projects in low- and moderate-income communities in Massachusetts and provides matching funds when projects meet their crowdfunding goals. Beyond Walls initially set its goal at \$50,000, which it reached in 14 days, in large part due to the success of the Lynn Museum event, and later exceeded its "reach" goal of \$80,000.

Philips Color Kinetics expanded its donation to include materials for lighting all three underpasses. Rick Jakious, district director for Congressman Seth Moulton (and later Beyond Walls' board chair), introduced the Barr Foundation to Beyond Walls, leading to a \$200,000 grant from the foundation. After another successful round of Commonwealth Places crowdfunding that raised \$93,487 from 1,405 local donors, the underpass lighting was installed in three locations over the winter of 2017-2018, with a formal dedication in June 2018.

The first mural festival took place in July 2017, producing 15 murals. The second mural festival occurred in August 2018, with 27 additional murals painted. Each two-week festival attracted world-renowned artists who



A Boston-based design firm prepared a rendering of proposed underpass lighting.



Fundraising for the installation was launched with an event at the Lynn Museum.

painted large-scale murals on building walls throughout downtown. The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades DC 35 primed walls for the murals and provided lift operation training and certifications for all of the artists.

In 2017 and 2018, Beyond Walls installed 11 vintage neon signs throughout downtown Lynn. The project was initiated by Wilson after meeting the sign owner and collector Dave Waller, who knew about the city's interest in increasing downtown lighting at night. In early 2019, Beyond Walls was working to install a restored GE jet engine (significant to the city given its longstanding connection to the company) as a public sculpture, create four pop-up vendor parklets, host a third mural festival, and create a new public open space called "The Launch" near the water.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Al Wilson is the key figure behind Beyond Walls, but many other local, regional, and international leaders have played important roles. Wilson's experience in business and his ability to make connections, leverage networks, and align project partners to raise money and secure necessary approvals were important factors in making the projects possible. Wilson has a degree in public relations and worked for 15 years in a variety of media, financial, technology, and start-up companies, including the Phoenix Media Group, Dig Publishing, AOL (formerly America Online), and a start-up called Kapow. He also founded and managed a website that focused on advertising sales for media publications.

Wilson quickly brought on board leaders in Lynn who did their best to pave the way for success. Drew Russo, executive director of the Lynn Museum and Lynn Arts, was an early and active supporter, using his political connections as a previous candidate for the Massachusetts House of Representatives to connect Wilson to other local leaders. Joe Mulligan, MassDevelopment's TDI Fellow, helped by lending his expertise alongside the imprimatur of MassDevelopment, which gave the project legitimacy. He was also instrumental in making the project happen—first by laying the groundwork through the *Downtown Action Strategy*, then by helping to make connections, engage local businesses, and navigate bureaucratic hurdles.



The Beyond Walls team included (pictured center, left to right): Pedro Soto, Julia Midland, and Al Wilson.



Local leaders including consultant Rosario Ubiera-Minaya (center) helped with community engagement.



The City of Lynn and Mayor Thomas McGee (center) provided critical support.



The nonprofit arm of the Lynn Housing Authority served as a fiscal sponsor.

In May 2019, Beyond Walls had a full-time staff of three, including Wilson. Lynn native and resident Pedro Soto began volunteering for the organization in 2017, first on the community advisory committee and then working nearly a second full-time job's worth of hours to produce the festival while employed as a senior planner in the neighboring City of Peabody. After eight months, Soto joined the staff full-time as associate director. Like Soto, Program Manager Julia Midland, an arts administrator who grew up and lives in nearby Swampscott, joined the staff after first volunteering with Beyond Walls in 2017. Two additional part-time positions provided support for community engagement and event management.

The City of Lynn also played a critical role. At first, Neighborhood Development Associates (NDA, the nonprofit arm of the Lynn Housing Authority) agreed to serve as the project's fiscal sponsor. The city's previous mayor, Judith Flanagan Kennedy, took a relatively hands-off approach to arts and placemaking-related projects. Mayor Thomas McGee, the son of a famous Massachusetts legislator, served as chairman of the Massachusetts Democratic Party and in the state senate and house of representatives for many years before running for mayor. McGee began his first mayoral term between Beyond Walls' first and second mural festivals. He has shifted the city government's stance to be much more proactively involved with Beyond Walls and associated initiatives, as he sees the organization as complementary to his strategy to attract market-rate development to help improve the city's tax base.

Other politicians contributed vital support. Congressman Seth Moulton's District Director, Rick Jakious, is now chair of the Beyond Walls Board of Directors, which was established as the organization pursued independent 501(c)3 status (now in place).

Three local community-based leaders—including Josie Santos, Doneeca Thurston, and Rosario Ubiera-Minaya—became involved to support Beyond Walls in its efforts to increase community engagement. Santos, who has been involved with Beyond Walls since its inception and was an original committee member, started working with the organization on a part-time basis and became its full-time community engagement director in May 2019.

Thurston, an arts administrator who grew up in Lynn, got involved with Beyond Walls to advise its community engagement and enhance community relations. She was later hired for a temporary part-time position to lead the Beyond Walls community events during the 2018 mural festival. Creative community development expert Ubiera-Minaya, owner of Cojuelos' Productions and founder of the Punto Urban Art Museum in nearby Salem, consulted with Beyond Walls in 2018 to build stronger relations with Lynn's immigrant communities and communities of color.

The Barr Foundation has also played a pivotal role, providing nearly half of the funding raised to date by Beyond Walls to support the mural festivals and lighting as well as development of a strategic planning process. The funding for strategic planning will specifically explore how Beyond Walls may work with other Massachusetts cities and support the Barr Foundation's interest in building a national and regional field of creative placemaking.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Beyond Walls is a combination of public art installations involving murals and lighting as well as special events and programming.

Murals

Beyond Walls has commissioned and installed 42 large-scale public murals as of May 2019 in downtown Lynn, all painted over the course of two intensive two-week periods during the street art festivals. Together the murals—many several stories tall—display a wide range of styles and subject material, showcasing large-scale human figures and abstract imagery, colors, and patterns. Mural content is up to each artist, so long as they do not depict anything that is not “family friendly” or that is overtly political. Beyond Walls seeks to hire muralists whose nationalities mirror



Large-scale murals are painted during two-week-long street art festivals.

those of the countries of origin of Lynn residents. The motivations behind aesthetic choices and subject material for the artwork are described by Beyond Walls staff on mural tours, and staff hope to create a booklet describing each piece soon.

The first 15 murals were painted during the inaugural festival held in July 2017. Only 10 were originally planned, but to build buzz and attract media attention, the team increased the number shortly before the festival after

exceeding their fundraising goal. Beyond Walls produced an additional 27 murals during the second mural festival, held in August 2018.

Muralists are selected by Beyond Walls staff and volunteer committee members. Each year a public request for proposals is posted, and some artists are invited by staff. The organization received 70 applications in 2017 and over 206 in 2018. International renown, cultural and gender diversity, and ability to complete a large-scale mural are three key criteria for selection. Beyond Walls has also focused on increasing diversity in its muralists, adding more female and international artists in 2018.

The murals are painted mainly on privately owned walls throughout downtown Lynn. A subcommittee of the larger volunteer committee identified and secured permissions for the walls, and the legal committee developed a contract process. Murals are several stories high, creating a substantial impact on the pedestrian environment. Participating wall owners are required through their contract to leave painted walls intact for one year, after which they can remove them, re-paint the walls, or demolish their buildings. Beyond Walls does not intend to maintain the murals, instead planning to place new art works when original pieces fade. To date none have been defaced or painted over.

In preparation for the festivals, the walls were primed and cleaned with volunteer labor donated by the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) local division DC 35. IUPAT also provided training for the artists on the safe use of lifts, which are required for many of the murals, and helped many artists secure Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) certification (which can improve their eligibility for future commissions). Primer was donated by Sherwin Williams. Additional materials were supplied by Beyond Walls.

The Beyond Walls team coordinated the first week-long mural festival without any prior experience. Wilson and Soto gleaned what they could from Instagram feeds from other festivals, friends at Pow! Wow! Worcester, and through advice from Cambridge-based muralist Caleb Neelon. They learned by doing, refining the process during the second year.

In 2017, each artist received a stipend of \$1,000 plus \$400 on a prepaid gift card that could be used at local Lynn businesses. In 2018, stipends were increased to \$1,500 and pre-paid cards to \$500. In addition, Beyond Walls provided roundtrip airfare for each artist and an assistant, as well as lodging at nearby Salem State University, materials, lift certification, and lifts. Each artist is highlighted on the organization's website and through social media. A report from the 2017 Mural Festival details measurable economic impacts that the event generated for small businesses in Lynn.

Ghost Signs

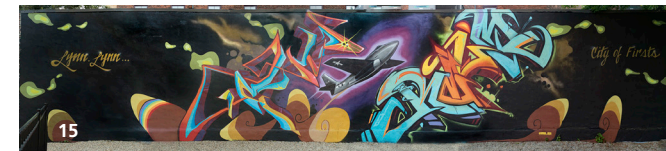
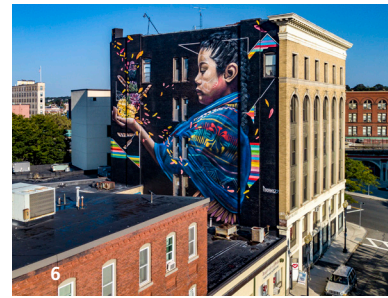
In addition to the original artwork painted by muralists, Beyond Walls commissioned two local artists to restore two "ghost signs," faded hand-painted advertisements painted on brick walls decades ago. Chrissy Lebel, owner of Lebel Signs in Lynn and originally from the nearby town of Peabody, re-painted the "Zimman's" sign, and Lynn-based sign painter Ted Kiley restored the "Empire" sign.

RetroLit

Beyond Walls has placed 11 vintage neon street signs throughout Lynn, including three that were installed in 2017 and eight additional ones in 2018. The signs were donated by Dave Waller, a local visual effects producer and neon sign collector whom Wilson learned about and contacted about working together. The signs have been installed in downtown locations that the city identified as needing additional lighting after dark. The signs are from around the Boston region and beyond and advertise old restaurants and businesses. Wilson worked with the city to obtain special permission to install the signs, as an existing ordinance forbids neon lights at businesses.

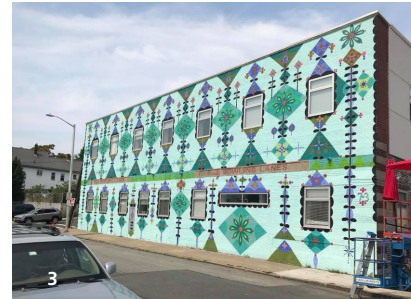
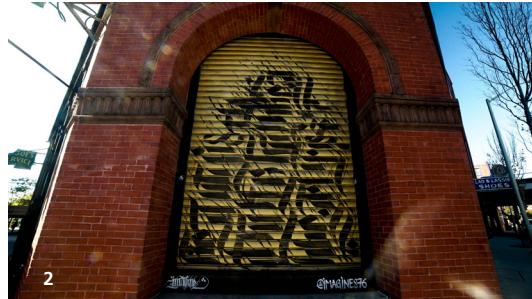
Lynn Lights

In June 2018, Beyond Walls installed lighting in three commuter rail underpasses in downtown Lynn with 247 "smart" LED fixtures. The lights, installed between the beams of the underpass structures, create ambient clouds of color that can be changed by remote control. The lighting design and installation were provided pro bono by LAM and Payette with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 103 doing the bulk of the installation work over the course of 10 weeks. Hardware and operating support was



2017 MURALS AND ARTISTS

1 Cedric "Vise" Douglas and Julz Roth; 2 FONKI; 3 Bruce Orr and Good 2 Go (RAW Art Works), image courtesy Creative Collective MA; 4 Miss Zukie (Alison Perez) and JPO; 5 Team Rekloos; 6 Marka27; 7 Tallboy (Chris Coulon) and Brian Denahy; 8 Don Rimx; 9 David Zayas; 10 Angurria; 11 Nicole Salgar and Chuck Berret; 12 Caleb Neelon; 13 Georgia Hill; 14 Cey Adams; 15 Temp and Reml (all images courtesy Beyond Walls except as noted).



2018 MURALS AND ARTISTS

1 Brian Beyung; **2** Imagine; **3** Bunnie Reiss; **4** Michal Maka; **5** Spiros (Wellington Naberezny); **6** Michal Maka; **7** Wasp Elder, image courtesy Erin Holly; **8** Kilia Llano, image courtesy Kilia Llano; **9** Imagine (Sneha Shrestha); **10** Chrissy Lebel and Ted Kiley; **11** Venom LMA (Lynn Mass Appeal); **12** Andrew Hem; **13** Free Humanity (all images courtesy Beyond Walls except as noted).



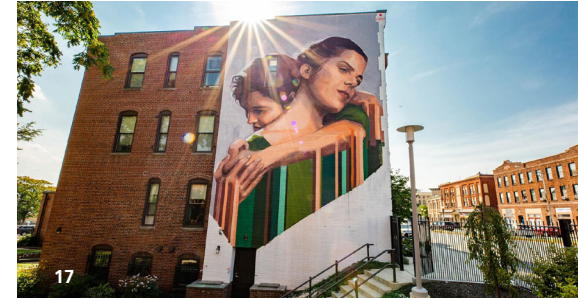
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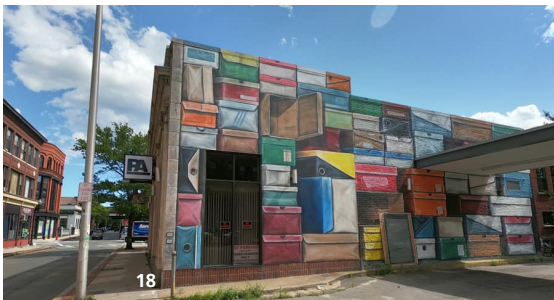
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2018 MURALS AND ARTISTS

14 Medio Peso; 15 Ruben Ubiera; 16 Yu-Baba and Key Detail; 17 Mariela Ajas, image courtesy Creative Collective MA; 18 Leon Keer, image courtesy Creative Collective MA; 19 Free Humanity; 20 JUURI; 21 Golden; 22 Imagine; 23 Damaris Cruz; 24 Sofia Maldonado; 25 Erik Skotnes (all images courtesy Beyond Walls except as noted).

donated by Port Lighting and Philips Color Kinetics. Together, over 600 feet of covered roadway and pedestrian passage were directly impacted. The newly lit underpasses—at Central Square, Washington Street, and Market Street—are close to the city's commuter rail stations.

General Electric Jet Engine Installation

In 2017, Beyond Walls received the donation of a rare 1942 I-A jet engine from GE Aviation. One of the first jet engines made in the United States and manufactured in Lynn, it had been in storage since 1972. Beyond Walls' staff sent selfies with the engine to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum to convince them that the engine was in their possession, and once convinced, the Smithsonian began working with Beyond Walls on a conservation plan. Over time, with support from students at Lynn Vocational Technical Institute and a conservator from Harvard Natural History Museum, the organization dismantled, cleaned, and reassembled the engine. There are tentative plans to install it at Lynn City Hall.

The Patio Parklets Program and the Launch

In 2019, in addition to a third festival, Beyond Walls planned to launch two new initiatives. The first is a parklet program called The Patio, which will host four local vendors downtown through small pop-up business kiosks. Parklets are defined by the National Association of City Transportation Officials as "public seating platforms that convert curbside parking spaces into vibrant community spaces." The second project, The Launch, is a proposal to temporarily activate a three-acre parcel of waterfront land near the ferry terminal as a concert venue, concession, and sports field. Beyond Walls has a three-year \$1/year lease (with two one-year options to renew) on the property, which is owned by the Lynn Economic Development and Industrial Commission. The space is currently in design and includes shipping containers as the main structures and a greenway double the width of the eight-foot requirement with the hope of inspiring additional waterfront development.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

Events

Beyond Walls' physical installations have been accompanied by activities and programs. In 2017, the organization hosted six public events throughout the



Vintage neon signs installed throughout downtown illuminate dark areas.

10-day mural festival. The largest, a day-long "Rock the Block" festival held in downtown Lynn near the murals and underpasses and featuring food trucks, live music, DJs, and vendors, drew over 700 people according to LynnHappens.com. In addition, Beyond Walls hosted three receptions inviting members of the public to meet artists, a discussion on the history of American graffiti and street art, and an outdoor yoga class.

In 2018, the organization produced a set of community events around the second mural festival. In addition to the "Rock the Block" festival, Beyond Walls hosted a storytelling event, a community garden open house, art classes, and more through what it called "The Hive"—a set of community-based programs organized by partners and included in festival marketing. The organization's staff have indicated that while well intentioned, Hive programming proved difficult logistically.

Other activities have been scheduled around key Beyond Walls events and throughout the year. When the underpass lighting was unveiled, the organization hosted a community dedication ceremony attracting approximately

Beyond Walls



Each mural festival included a day-long "Rock the Block" event with live music.

Beyond Walls



In 2017, Artist Bruce Orr (right) partnered with RAW ArtWorks and local youth on one mural.

500 attendees. According to its organizers and museum staff, the initial fundraiser at the Lynn Museum attracted a more racially diverse audience than is typical in Lynn and helped to cement Beyond Walls' influence. The organization has made efforts to hire staff, consultants, local leaders, and artists of color and is working to ensure that increased diversity translates to organizational governance and impact.

Consulting Services

Beyond Walls is working to diversify its income streams to reduce its current reliance on foundation funding. The organization has begun consulting on other projects on a fee-for-service basis. It served as an advisor for a mural painted by French public artist Eltono on the new offices of innovation sector firm IDEO in nearby Cambridge and in May 2019 was working with the Cabot Theatre, a performing arts and movie venue in neighboring Beverly, helping to solicit proposals from artists to paint several murals on the building. Several other cities have sought services from Beyond Walls, and the organization is currently determining when and how it might scale its operations.

FINANCING

Beyond Walls' 2017 and 2018 mural and lighting installations were completed with a total budget of \$913,592, including in-kind support. This includes both funding and the value of in-kind support to facilitate the installation of 42 murals, 11 neon signs, two ghost signs, and three underpass lighting projects, along with associated staffing, overhead, and miscellaneous costs.

The development budget (Table 1) reflects revenue and expenses for all Beyond Walls activities from inception through October 2018. Fiscal Year 2017 includes a total of 17 months ending in June 30, 2017. Fiscal Year 2018 includes 12 months beginning July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2018. Figures for 2019 include July 1 through October 31, 2018.

Of the \$509,600 contributed by foundations, \$400,000 was from the Barr Foundation. Other foundation sources include the Boston Foundation, Highland Street Foundation, Van Otterloo Family Foundation, Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation, Salem Five Charitable Corporation, Santander Foundation, and Gerondalis Foundation.

Much of the funds from individuals was procured through the MassDevelopment Patronicity crowdfund challenge. The matching funds are included in the "individuals" line item in the development budget. A total of \$80,665 was raised from 1,388 non-unique donations.

Separate from these crowdfunding efforts, two large gifts of \$75,000 and \$30,000 were also received from philanthropic individuals in Lynn.

Government sources include contributions from the City of Lynn's Economic Development and Industrial Commission and the Lynn Housing and Neighborhood Development Department, as well as federal funding via the city's Community Development Block Grants.

Beyond Walls received significant in-kind support, which accounts for approximately 50% of its annual budget. The materials and labor for all three of the lighting installations were donated, along with a three-year maintenance contract. Paint and wall priming labor were donated, along with

TABLE 1: DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

SOURCES	FY 2017*	FY 2018	FY 2019**
Individuals	\$50,229	\$157,553	\$14,393
Corporations	\$86,105	\$80,654	\$69,555
Foundations	\$56,103	\$231,000	\$222,500
Government	\$38,500	\$117,500	\$20,000
Contribution collection fees	(\$1,497)	(\$2,180)	(\$279)
In-kind contributions	\$269,500	\$428,206	\$275,522
Other income***	\$5,377	\$5,552	\$2,522
Total	\$504,317	\$1,018,285	\$604,213
USES			
Placemaking Projects	\$329,682	\$713,984	\$530,488
Fundraising	\$21,928	\$59,116	\$6,544
General and Administrative	\$33,731	\$166,037	\$112,700
Total	\$385,342	\$939,137	\$649,731
NET INCOME	\$118,975	\$79,148	(\$45,518)

*Includes 17 months ending June 30, 2017.

**Includes the first four months of the fiscal year ending October 31, 2018.

***Includes consulting fees, interest, and merchandise sales.

training for artists regarding how to use a lift. In 2017 Beyond Walls stated that for every dollar raised, it had leveraged \$.85 in in-kind support.

The majority of expenses, approximately 75% to 85%, are direct project costs. General and administrative expenses include personnel and occupancy.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Impact

While it is too early to fully assess the long-term impacts of Beyond Walls' initiatives, they have generated an enormous amount of positive buzz and media attention. Many hope that this is the beginning of a new chapter for Lynn, improving both perceptions of the city and its economy. Many credit Beyond Walls with helping to attract interest in Lynn from start-up businesses, real estate developers and investors, and new residents. Art enthusiasts around the country have applauded the project, and images of its dynamic artworks are shared extensively on social media. The project has increased regional dialogue and excitement about the role of public art and placemaking projects in Gateway Cities.



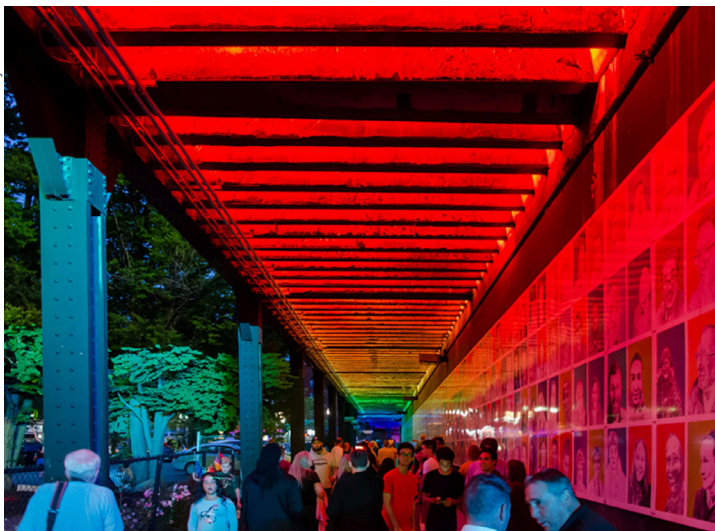
Beyond Walls' murals and lighting have drawn local and national interest.

Beyond Walls



Once-dark commuter rail underpasses were perceived as dangerous.

Beyond Walls



New lighting has transformed them into community gateways.

As in other cities in similar circumstances across America, increased interest from developers and investors has led to concerns about rising rents and potential displacement of existing residents, social service organizations, and businesses. This, in turn, has prompted conversation about the need for policies and governance that ensure the changes that occur benefit all.

City of Lynn officials, the business community, community-based organizations, and local advocacy groups all expressed different aspirations for Beyond Walls. City officials focused on the buzz and branding generated by Beyond Walls, seeing it as good for economic development and redefining the image of Lynn. Community development and advocacy groups wanted the work to go further by seeking more inclusivity and opportunities for previously underrepresented groups to have a voice in the initiative and expanding efforts to avoid gentrification. Beyond Walls does not view these as mutually exclusive and has been enhancing its community engagement efforts in response to these aspirations.

Wilson is interested in taking the Beyond Walls model to other cities, and the Barr Foundation is supporting an exploration of the feasibility of a regional Beyond Walls expansion. Other municipal governments in the area have called to ask for advice and support in implementing similar projects. Many supporters are excited about the expansion of large-scale public art and the positive impacts it is having on the city and are excited to see more cities around Massachusetts follow suit.

Changing Perceptions of Lynn

Beyond Walls' installations have generated a significant amount of media interest, attracting attention and admiration from art enthusiasts and others in the region and beyond. The festivals' design, short and intense with the production of a large number of larger pieces of high-quality public art, is intended to make a splash—and by all accounts it has succeeded. A Webb Management Services report commissioned by Beyond Walls cited 75 articles written about the festival in the first year. The initiative is helping to bring visitors and "Old Lynnners" alike back to downtown and create a positive impression for a city that has struggled to overcome negative perceptions and loss from decades of economic decline.

The organization seeks to engender local pride, honor local history, and engage the Lynn community in its efforts. Many feel buoyed by and proud of the work, and local property owners and residents expressed pride that their buildings were chosen for sites of new, public art painted by international artists. Some murals honor local heroes and history, such as Jan Ernst Matzeliger, the African American shoe entrepreneur and inventor, and Beyond Walls hopes that the preservation and display of the GE engine will spark more pride in the city's industrial roots.

Art as an Economic Catalyst

Wilson, Soto, and others involved with Beyond Walls have indicated that they hope the project will attract more market-rate investment and development to Lynn, citing the idea that a healthy community has a mix of incomes. Wilson shared that “part of this is economic development. We want to take a position and lean in. Lynn needs development. We hope that rising tides lift all boats. Part of what we are doing is making Lynn a safer and more vibrant place.”

In terms of demonstrated economic impact to date, the Webb report found that the festival had some moderate benefits. The study found that festival visitors spent at least \$110,000 in two coffee shops during the festival, drove \$150,000 in new sales and \$30,000 in new earnings, and created the equivalent of nearly one full-time job (an estimation based on sales). Also, the study indicated that more people continue to visit restaurants downtown than they had before. In addition to the direct dollars spent by Beyond Walls on artist fees, contractors, and event-related expenses, the organization created three new permanent full-time staff positions and several temporary part-time ones. Three interns from Lynn Vocational High School who worked with the local electrician's union on the festival have now been placed in jobs, though it is unclear whether this may have happened without Beyond Walls' help (the high school has a vocational training feeder program).

Jon Olinto, the proprietor of the bakery One Mighty Mill, indicated that when he was touring the region looking for a location for his new business, Beyond Walls was one of the only initiatives that the City of Lynn's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation was able to showcase as a selling point for



The art installations have attracted new people to Lynn and generated community pride.



Additional public space improvements are planned, including a new waterfront park.

the city. One Mighty Mill supplies whole grain bread to both Lynn and the Boston Public Schools district as part of its mission to re-grow the region's local farming economy, and its downtown café offers a 50% discount to Lynn residents. Olinto helped bring another new catering business, Uncommon Feasts, to Lynn. Both businesses have social missions and bring new, outside investment and people to the community along with new activity and jobs to downtown.

Several market-rate housing projects were in development downtown in 2019. The majority of the new real estate development projects are along the waterfront, which is separated from downtown Lynn by a large highway called the Lynnway. City leaders hope that the new development will help to alleviate some of the city's financial challenges.

As is often the case, it is difficult to assess whether economic development can be attributed to any single project or initiative. The following development projects closed and/or were underway since Beyond Walls started:

- 10 Monroe: Construction began in early 2019 on a 250-unit market-rate project in downtown Lynn. The site used to be a beloved community farm run by the Food Project. According to Wilson, the project's investors were attracted to Lynn because of the attention surrounding Beyond Walls.
- Tacos Lupita Building: The first Opportunity Zone-financed project was under construction in early 2019 in downtown Lynn. Developed by Somerville-based real estate and property management company RCG, the renovation of the historic building includes preservation of the popular local eatery Tacos Lupita and conversion of the upper floors to 18 new market-rate units.
- Lynnway Mart Site: A new 550-unit market-rate development along the waterfront includes ground-floor commercial space and parking.
- Porthole Restaurant Site: Patrick McGrath, the same developer of the Lynnway Mart, purchased the revered local restaurant Porthole in May 2018 with plans to redevelop the site into 55 luxury condominiums along the waterfront, pending approval of a variance to build eight stories (the site is currently zoned for five).
- Beacon Chevrolet Site/254 Lynnway: This large-scale, 14-acre site along

the waterfront development broke ground in 2018, with 332 market-rate apartments planned. Local groups mounted a petition that asked the city to require a percentage of the units to be affordable.

- Garelick Farms Site: A.W. Perry, a Boston-based real estate investment firm, acquired this waterfront site in early 2019, initially intending it for industrial use with plans to later redevelop it for mixed use with housing, commercial space, and a hotel.

As Robert Maloney, executive vice president of Garelick Farms, said in an interview with the *Lynn Item*, "We like the real estate dynamic and resurgence in Lynn. There was a time nobody would invest in Somerville, now Assembly Row is thriving. Lynn is a natural to be next."

Growing Cultural Communities and Constituencies

Beyond Walls has supported growing arts communities in several ways. The Webb study showed that several artists featured in Beyond Walls mural festivals went on to receive several other commissions in the area, and in 2018, youth from RAW Artworks had the opportunity to help paint with an internationally known mural artist, Eltono. Local projects by Pow! Wow! Worcester and El Punto Urban Art Museum have reportedly begun paying their mural artists as well.

Results from the 2018 Webb survey indicated that overall response to the 10-day 2017 festival was positive, but respondents were not demographically representative of the city. Many community leaders and residents feel that Beyond Walls is strengthening community ties by providing jobs, creating opportunities to gather across cultural and economic divides, improving pedestrian activity in the public realm, and increasing pride in Lynn. Russo shared that "those 10 days of that first festival in 2017 was like Mr. Rogers' neighborhood. People smiled, walked around. I have not experienced that in the whole time I have lived in the city." However, a respondent to the Webb survey noted a "'lack of people of color at the event,' expressing concern about the inclusivity of the event to minority populations." As the Webb study noted, this concern is not unique to Beyond Walls and is something that peer organizations in other cities have had to address. Some affordable housing and community advocates in Lynn

have expressed concern that Beyond Walls may unintentionally be contributing to socioeconomic change that could displace existing lower-income residents and people of color.

Inclusive Economic Development

Beyond Walls has generated significant dialogue about the role of public art and placemaking in helping to revitalize post-industrial cities. Underlying the debates are competing theories of change regarding how economic development should proceed, who should lead, and how to ensure benefits address longstanding inequities. High-profile creative projects have shown significant ability to draw attention to and thus attract new real estate investment in cities and districts struggling to recover from manufacturing decline and disinvestment. City governments, which over time have come to rely more and more on real estate taxes as sources of income to provide public services, are in a position to benefit from these efforts, and communities hoping to see long-suffering cities rebound support them, too. Investing in arts activities can help boost a city's economy while also building creative communities. The hope is that new investments will help everyone live better lives in disinvested cities, with new residents spending money locally, new businesses that create jobs in order to serve these new customers, and new tax income to support city services. Observers of disinvestment and reinvestment cycles who look at data disaggregated by class and race have indicated, however, that these improvements do not automatically benefit all. Creative placemaking initiatives like Beyond Walls have choices to make regarding political alliances, leadership, decision-making, partnerships, design, curation, and more to fulfill their vision of strengthening the community. Beyond Walls has continued to host community listening sessions to increase its participatory decision-making approaches and collaboration so that local residents, organizations, and constituencies can benefit from its success.

OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Strong, Independent Leadership Amidst Fragmented Civic Infrastructure

The story of Beyond Walls is closely tied to its founder, Al Wilson. Beyond Walls has accomplished so much largely due to his vision, tenacity, ability to bring in funders, and ability to navigate the process of securing local buy-in and



The art installations and events have helped to bring people back downtown.



Al Wilson and Beyond Walls have affected visible change in a relatively short time.

necessary approvals. This was especially valuable in a community lacking clear regulations, transparent civic processes, and a well-defined planning vision.

With a significant structural budget deficit, the city has not had the capacity to invest in long-range planning and infrastructure, leaving it in a position to appreciate volunteer efforts. Lynn is shouldering more than its fair share of an entire region's needs for affordable housing, and the city's political leadership believes that encouraging private market-rate development is a central strategy for increasing the city's tax revenue. Thus, many in the city supported the project with the hope that it could generate interest and attract private investment. As Mayor McGee shared, "We were waiting for a spark to bring us back, and Beyond Walls has tapped into that."

The Evolution of a Small, Tactical Nonprofit

Beyond Walls' work has evolved quickly over time, reflecting its self-described "baptism by fire" approach. The organization's funders and local partners have supported Beyond Walls' ability to learn by doing with the hope that the initiative will help revitalize the city. This investment has succeeded in producing a visible impact in a very short period of time. This success has been made possible, in part, by Beyond Wall's small size, nimbleness, and autonomy; it did not become a 501(c)3 with a board of directors until 2018. The organization's mission has also evolved over time, from initially seeking to attract new people and development to downtown Lynn to focusing on "activating spaces to strengthen community."

Beyond Walls uses a variety of tactical urbanism techniques, all of which share an entrepreneurial, fast-paced, learn-by-doing approach. The murals, lighting installations, and planned parklet and shipping container public space project all utilize easily acquirable and buildable materials. Projects are high impact yet intended to be temporary, with no plans for long-term maintenance of the murals or parklets.

Beyond Walls' fast-paced approach has led to many lessons along the way. The organization's staff went into the first year without any direct experience or much knowledge about the complexity of producing a mural event. They were able to broker critical partnerships with building trade unions, which

provided key pieces of labor and valuable expertise. Even so, there were challenges. During the first festival, some artists were left without the paints and brushes they had requested because others had "borrowed" them. Staff phone numbers were given out to artists who were told to call any staff person with a question or request. As a result, the staff received an unmanageable number of service calls, often duplicates. Additionally, staffing schedules did not overlap, leaving gaps at shift changes.

Adjustments were made after the first year which made things easier. Temporary staffing schedules were created with shift overlaps. A system was established to ensure that all calls were funneled through one point and tasks assigned through a tracking mechanism. In 2018, the system logged 280 requests, about 40% of which were change orders. Additional event management improvements were planned for the 2019 festival. Artists were asked to request materials by a certain date and were required to sign off on their materials when they arrived. Shipping containers were set up in various zones throughout the festival with supplies for three designated artists, minimizing any mixing of materials. Ten Lynn-based teenagers and young adults were hired as artist runners and dispatch personnel, providing opportunities for them to learn interpersonal and project management skills while helping the Beyond Walls team produce the festival and accompanying community events.

The lighting installations have also gone through several trial and error processes. During an evening mural tour in April 2019, a new feature was tested that would allow anyone to change the color of the lights using Twitter. The feature did not work as planned, and during the test one set of lights inexplicably turned off. Working through kinks like these has been part of the process of trying out new ways of encouraging public interaction with the art.

Artist Pay and Representation

Beyond Walls has also made changes to its policies for artist representation and pay. After receiving feedback regarding an insufficient number of female artists, organizers included more in the 2018 cohort and added programming for hopeful artists to learn from female muralists through a talk-back session. Beyond Walls focuses on commissioning artists whose nationality is representative of demographic and immigrant groups in Lynn,

including Cambodian, Dominican, and Puerto Rican. Advocates hope that this focus on the nationality of commissioned artists will translate into concrete partnerships with local organizations and more artists representing those demographic groups.

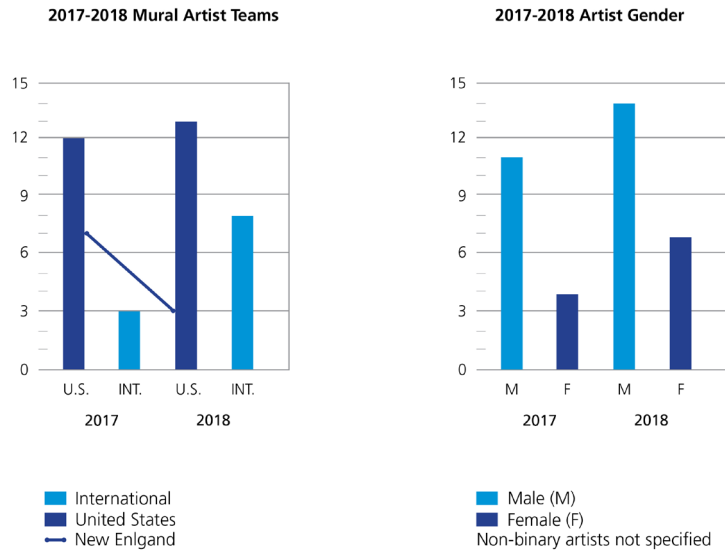
Between 2017 and 2018, Beyond Walls increased individual artist stipends from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and raised meal stipends from \$400 to \$500. According to the 2018 Webb report, the majority of artists believed “\$1,000 to \$5,000 to be a suitable starting place.” Wilson suggested that the lower stipends are made possible by allowing artists full artistic freedom to paint what they wish (with the exception of anything that is overtly political or not family friendly). Even so, the Webb report identified the issue of fees as a “high priority matter,” especially in light of the increasing number of mural festivals worldwide.

While many identify artistic freedom as a critical element of success for mural programs and public arts projects—that high-quality artistic pieces require a strong vision and implementation by the artist—some question the appropriateness and lack of site specificity of some of the imagery used by artists. Some residents feel that there is an over-representation and in some cases objectification of women in many of the murals painted by men, while others love the presence of the female form throughout the city. One mural depicts a local female business owner several stories tall, and the attention it has brought has been both a source of pride and discomfort. She agreed to be photographed for inclusion in the mural because she was one of dozens to be asked, but the artist later decided to only focus on her and did not (and was not required to) check with her to make sure that it would be okay.

Beyond Walls is also engaged in dialogue about including more local artists. With its focus on artistic excellence and “international stars” as Wilson describes it, the organization has sought to commission artists with experience on the festival circuit. Wilson expressed reservations about commissioning those with less experience to produce large-scale outdoor murals, especially given the intensity of the festival’s demands and need for artists to be largely self-sufficient, although there are artists in the region who have demonstrated expertise in this arena through recent commissions by public and private

MURAL ARTISTS

YEAR	ARTIST(S)	RESIDENCE
2017	Angurria	Dominican Republic
	Bruce Orr and Good 2 Go	Beverly, MA and Lynn, MA
	Caleb Neelon	Cambridge, MA
	Cey Adams	New York, NY
	David Zayas	Puerto Rico
	Don Rimx	Miami, FL
	FONKi	Montreal, Canada
	Georgia Hill	Australia
	Nicole Salgar and Chuck Berret	Miami, FL and New York, NY
	Marka27	New York, NY
	Miss Zukie and JPO	New York, NY and Fairfield County, CT
	Tallboy and Brian Denahy	Lynn, MA and Swampscott, MA
	Team Rekloos	Boston, MA and Dorchester, MA
	Temp & Relm	Lynn, MA
	Vise 1 and Julz Roth	Boston, MA
2018	Andrew Hem	Los Angeles, CA
	Beyung	Montreal, Canada
	Bunnie Reiss	Los Angeles, CA
	Chrissy Lebel and Ted Kiley	Lynn, MA
	Damaris Cruz	Puerto Rico
	Eltono, Bruce Orr, and Good 2 Go	France and Lynn, MA
	Eric Skotnes	Los Angeles, CA
	Free Humanity	Los Angeles, CA
	Golden	Wynwood, FL
	Imagine	Somerville, MA
	JUURI	Oklahoma City, OK
	Kilia Llano	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
	Leon Keer	The Netherlands
	Mariela Ajas	Buenos Aires, Argentina
	Medio Peso	Dominican Republic
	Michael Maka	Melbourne, Australia
	Ruben Ubiera	Wynwood, FL
	Sipros	São Paulo, Brazil
Sofia Maldonado	San Juan, Puerto Rico	
Venom LMA (Lynn Mass Appeal)	Miami, FL and Lynn, MA	
Wasp Elder	United Kingdom	
Yu-Baba and Key Detail	New York, NY	



Beyond Walls has made an effort to balance artist nationality and gender.



The organization seeks artists that reflect the ethnic diversity of the community.

entities outside of Lynn. As of May 2019, Beyond Walls was hoping to commission local artist and RAW Artworks alumnus Michael Agahawa after he apprenticed with mural artists in 2018. Artist apprenticeships, community partnerships, and other creative strategies may continue to improve the inclusion of local muralists.

Increasing Inclusivity, Diversity, and Accountability

Beyond Walls is committed to including a wide swath of the Lynn community in its leadership, decision-making, program design, and impact. Staff described the project as “bottom-up” with its early reliance on the community committee, response to recommendations from the TDI planning process, Soto’s role (as a Lynn native and staff member), and other community leadership (which by fall 2019 also included resident and full-time staff member Josie Santos). As of May 2019, the board, led by Rick Jakious, district director for Congressman Seth Moulton, included a total of seven members including business, political, and philanthropic professionals. Of the seven, Carolina Trujillo, publisher of the local Spanish language publication *La Voz* and the only Lynn resident and person of color on the board, was tasked with convening a community committee.

Beyond Walls is actively working to broker stronger relationships with culturally specific community-based organizations in the city by inviting them to hold yearly programming, such as the annual Cambodian festival in the planned waterfront park. As Beyond Walls consultant Ubiera-Minaya and others in Lynn have observed, when the initiative got started, its leaders were focused on establishing relationships with business and political leaders. As a result, according to Ubiera-Minaya, many residents, particularly people of color, were not apparently aware of the mural festival or its goals, allowing rumors to grow and misinformation to circulate. Ubiera-Minaya has encouraged the organization to integrate itself more deeply into the community through direct engagement, relationship building, and feedback loops. As part of this effort, she has set up one-on-one meetings between Beyond Walls staff and community leaders, and two listening sessions were held in spring 2019. In addition, Ubiera-Minaya recommended that the organization hire a staff person to focus on community engagement, a recommendation implemented with the hiring of Josie Santos as full-time community engagement director in May 2019.

Concerns about inclusion stem from the struggle of communities of color within Lynn to participate in planning for the city's future. For decades, resident-led projects in Lynn and ideas have been curtailed or stymied by lack of city resources for planning and development. Although multiple planning efforts have engaged residents in charrettes and meetings, there is frustration that the results have not been shared and at the lack of progress. Many cite "planning fatigue," especially among Lynn's communities of color and lower-income residents. From a racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic perspective, the majority of the city is underrepresented and thus without a voice regarding civic matters. As a result, Beyond Walls' ability to accomplish changes within a tight timeframe and apparent alignment with the powers that be stood out. As it moves forward, the organization will have to balance its efforts to increase local inclusivity while it pursues projects across the region and beyond.

As San San Wong, director of arts and creativity for the Barr Foundation, observed, it is not unusual for tensions to emerge when a new creative start-up begins working within an established community, especially in communities of color and where there are long-standing organizations that feel they haven't been recognized for their contributions. The emergence of a new organization and leadership can be a good time for a reassessment of the community's needs and to identify gaps and opportunities for new partnerships and services to address them.

Concerns about Gentrification and Displacement

As with many other high-profile placemaking and public art projects, Beyond Walls has received both credit and criticism for changes that are taking place in Lynn. Given growing demand for housing and office space and rising real estate prices in the Boston region, the city was poised to experience an increase in real estate development investment with or without this project. While Lynn is eager to attract new investment, there is concern about its impact on existing residents and its potential to cause gentrification and displacement.

Beyond Walls consultant Ubiera-Minaya reported that displacement was the overwhelming concern expressed in the most recent round of conversations with local groups. She noted that Beyond Walls' initial level of community



Creative Collective MA

Artists receive stipends that cover housing and travel and have the freedom to paint what they wish.



Beyond walls

Beyond Walls is expanding community engagement with local partnerships.

dialogue was not sufficient to help most residents understand the goals of the project and build trust and open dialogue with some of its leaders. In the meantime, evictions and displacement have been on the rise, even with several city-financed affordable housing developments completed in recent years.

Beyond Walls has been increasing its efforts to involve the community through partnerships and programming with local organizations and youth, especially with the leadership of Josie Santos as the new full-time community engagement director. Meanwhile, there is hope among housing advocates and others in the community that formal policies and participatory decision-making processes can be put in place by the City of Lynn to ensure positive changes in Lynn benefit all.

MEETING PROJECT GOALS

GOAL: Strengthen the community by activating downtown spaces through creative placemaking.

The Webb report mainly focused on the mural festival's economic impact and press, but the survey also revealed community impacts. Survey respondents noted that the festival had promoted civic pride in Lynn, and anecdotally, many community members have shared similar sentiments. A more complete study measuring indicators of social cohesion would be able to gauge to what degree certain communities have been strengthened or not, and to what degree that change is a result of Beyond Walls' work.

GOAL: Improve the perception of Lynn through investment in the downtown public realm.

Although Beyond Walls has attracted new visitors to downtown Lynn, it's difficult to measure its full impact on new residents and businesses and overall pedestrian activity. The Webb report indicated that more than 5,000 visitors attended the first 10-day mural festival, and Beyond Walls estimated that numbers were higher for the 2018 event. In addition, Beyond Walls' tours and programming attract residents of the North Shore and greater Boston area to the city, some of whom stay to visit its businesses and cultural venues. Beyond Walls' planned parklet projects may continue to support this trend. Mighty Mill founder Olinto said that his decision to locate in Lynn was influenced by the city's promotion of Beyond Walls. TDI Fellow Mulligan indicated

that since Beyond Walls began, business owners have come to him to ask for help in increasing beautification and pedestrian-friendly activities.

GOAL: Increase pedestrian safety and economic activity downtown with the introduction of new lighting and public art.

Given the short amount of time the project has been in place, it is difficult to measure its impact on the city's economy and safety. Beyond Walls' investments have focused on downtown Lynn in part due to MassDevelopment TDI's planning efforts and mission to make downtown Lynn a destination for arts, culture, and dining. Participants in a TDI-related charrette focused on downtown Lynn identified lighting under the commuter rail overpasses as one of its top five priorities, along with encouraging businesses to activate sidewalks and creating public art.

Crime statistics from the Lynn Police Department show decreasing amounts of crime from 2016 to the present, reflecting an overall downward trend downtown, although it is difficult to connect Beyond Walls' work to the change as it was already in progress when the project started. Areas under the overpasses were identified as extremely high in terms of crash rates, but no data was available to indicate whether there has been a change.

One of the goals of the lighting and murals is to encourage pedestrian activity downtown, both for residents and for commuters and regional visitors, but no data had been gathered to measure its impact. Several people shared that they believe the project has helped to do this, including a visually impaired woman who said that the lighting has improved downtown, making her feel safer. Other residents and stakeholders shared that they have not noticed significant differences in downtown pedestrian activity.

GOAL: Produce visible, high-quality murals that reflect the culture of the community by engaging locally, nationally, and internationally renowned artists.

The project has succeeded in bringing internationally renowned mural artists to a city in the Boston region that had previously not been well-known as a center for public art. While mural festivals have taken place elsewhere in the region, the rapid pace of production and participation of international artists

is somewhat unique to this project. Beyond Walls staff have indicated that part of the goal was to ensure that communities of color in Lynn see their cultures reflected in the murals. While the organization has made an effort to include artists representative of the community, it is unclear whether residents themselves think this is important. Some people in the community have observed that Beyond Walls' programs are more diverse than other mainstream arts programming, and the organization's staff report seeing residents taking selfies of themselves with the murals.

GOAL: Attract media attention to change the narrative around Lynn.

Beyond Walls has successfully increased positive media representation of Lynn and has attracted many new visitors downtown. With over 65 pieces of positive media and 4.5 million social media impressions, the project has generated a significant local and national buzz and made headlines, helping to offset Lynn's long-held "City of Sin" image.

SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Selection Committee commended Beyond Walls for its role in generating community pride and inspiring new interest in downtown Lynn through high-quality art murals and lighting installations. They praised the project for its use of classic, tactical creative placemaking techniques to energize the community and draw attention to the city. They also noted that the incorporation of lighting through the use of vintage neon signs and underpass illumination not only helped improve pedestrian and vehicular safety but also distinguishes the project from other mural initiatives.

The committee praised the project for using art to create instant, visible results at modest costs via tactics that appear transferable to other cities with comparable issues. They saw value in a project that is relatively quick and easy to execute, inexpensive, and temporary. They agreed it provides a model for other communities, especially other "gateway cities."

The project was not an organic, community-based initiative, and the committee recognized Al Wilson's skill and effectiveness in navigating the city's power structure to make things happen quickly. They acknowledged the project's effective use of technology, including social media and crowdfunding, to

"Beyond Walls provides a model for other communities, especially other 'gateway cities' seeking quick and powerful ways to change a negative image."

promote the project and attract the interest of a broad range of people both within and outside Lynn.

While the committee commended the project's use of public art to create rapid, visible results, they acknowledged its transient nature and questioned its long-term impact on artists and the community as a whole. They noted that there are many examples of places across the United States and abroad where artists who were a part of the early stages of neighborhood revitalization were later forced out as conditions improved and property values rose. The committee also noted the importance of balancing the participation of renowned international artists with local ones.

The committee recommended the creation of robust online resources with information about the murals, lighting installations, and artists and their connection with the initiative and community.

The committee expressed concern about the lack of more extensive community involvement, especially among low-income and minority residents, and about how effectively the project spoke to or connected with people living in Lynn. Some committee members wondered if the focus on the murals as a quick means of attracting attention to Lynn came at the cost of making a broader and more lasting impact. They agreed that the project's contributions to equitable placemaking was unclear.

The project generated a good bit of discussion about the intersections of public art, creative placemaking, gentrification, and displacement. Some committee members urged caution about laying the gentrification narrative onto slow-growth cities that have experienced long decline and disinvestment. The discussion prompted the question as to what degree artists and individual initiatives assume responsibility for filling in the gap. In the end, the committee suggested that Beyond Walls' value may be as a short-term catalyst rather than a long-term vision or plan.



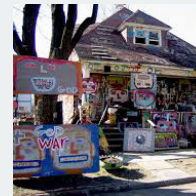
The project illustrates the impact of public art and artists in creative placemaking and in driving community change.

RELATED RBA WINNERS

Many past RBA winners have incorporated art and creative placemaking activities as part of broader development strategies. Few, however, utilize public art and programming as the primary driver. Like Beyond Walls, the following projects started as small-scale efforts in urban areas that experienced decline and disinvestment and sought to change perceptions of their communities through the use of public art.



THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES in Philadelphia (2001 Gold Medalist) uses arts-inspired programs to create place, build self-esteem, and foster community in north Philadelphia. The organization created series of "living sculpture" art parks and offers education and vocational training for youth and adults and other programs that serve primarily low-income Black residents.



THE HEIDELBERG PROJECT in Detroit (2005 Silver Medalist) is a series of open-air art installations created by a local artist to inspire community change by building bridges and healing individuals and communities through the creative process. Despite partial demolition by the city on two occasions, the project has become the third largest tourist destination in Detroit, attracting visitors from around the world.



ARTScorpLA in Los Angeles (1999 Silver Medalist) is a community-based program that fosters creativity by turning abandoned lots into art parks and gathering places. Its mission is to revitalize neighborhoods and empower residents by facilitating innovative land use, providing arts-related training and educational opportunities for youth, and fostering community involvement and pride.

Other RBA winners with a significant focus on public art and arts programming include Project Row Houses in Houston (1997 Silver Medalist); Artists for Humanity Epicenter in Boston (2007 Silver Medalist); the Steel Yard in Providence, Rhode Island (2013 Silver Medalist); and Inner City Arts in Los Angeles (2009 Gold Medalist).

More information about these and other RBA winners can be found at www.rudybruneraward.org.

Resources

This report was compiled from information gathered from the project application; an extensive site visit by Simeon Bruner, Robert Shibley, Anne-Marie Lubenau, Barbara Epstein, Kylie King, and Danya Sherman (lead author) in April 2019; and research and interviews conducted during those processes and throughout the writing of this report. Titles and positions of interviewees and URLs listed below were effective as of the site visit unless otherwise noted.

INTERVIEWS

Beyond Walls

- **Julia Midland**, Program Manager
- **Pedro Soto**, Associate Director
- **Doneca Thurston**, Creative Engagement Producer, Peabody Essex Museum and Temporary Program Coordinator for Beyond Walls
- **Rosario Ubiera-Minaya**, Owner, Cojuelos' Productions and consultant to Beyond Walls
- **Al Wilson**, Founder and CEO

Design Team

- **Ron Kuszmar**, Vice President, Architectural and Theatrical Lighting, Port Lighting
- **Parke MacDowell**, Associate and Fabrication Manager, Payette Architects
- **Dan Weissman**, Senior Associate and Director of Lam Labs, Lam Partners

Local Businesses and Organizations

- **Shanel Anderson**, Owner, Soul City Yoga
- **Kit Jenkins**, Co-founder and Executive Director, RAW Art Works
- **Kurt and Jen Lange**, Land of a Thousand Hills Coffee Company and the Haven Project
- **Jon Olinto**, Co-founder, One Mighty Mill
- **Drew Russo**, Executive Director, Lynn Museum
- **Marianne Staniunus**, Co-founder, Uncommon Feasts

- **Gordon Trainer**, Property Manager, RCG, LLC

Public Agencies and Funders

- **James Cowdell**, Director of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC)
- **Charles Gaeta**, Executive Director of the Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development and Chairman of the EDIC Board
- **SueEllen Kroll**, Program Officer, Arts and Creativity, Barr Foundation
- **Thomas McGee**, Mayor, City of Lynn
- **Joseph Mulligan**, Transformative Development Initiative Fellow, MassDevelopment
- **Captain Chris Reddy**, City of Lynn Police Department
- **Karen Ristuben**, Creative County Initiative Program Director, Essex County Community Foundation
- **E. San San Wong**, Director of Arts and Creativity, Barr Foundation

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