Social Contract

City of Lynn, Massachusetts
Community Violence Prevention Plan

Photo Credit: Jacob Devlin and Alex Koppelman

October 2025

Prepared by

Social Contract

Acknowledgements

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For questions about this project, please contact info@socialcontract.org.

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Letter from the Mayor

Dear Community:

There are two important premises on which this report is based. First, community violence must end. Second, the causes of community violence are many. They extend beyond our city's borders and often defy simple explanations.

Still, as a community, we can take action together to move toward our first goal: **ending community violence.**

I wholeheartedly embrace both premises and, since you are reading this, I expect that you do as well.
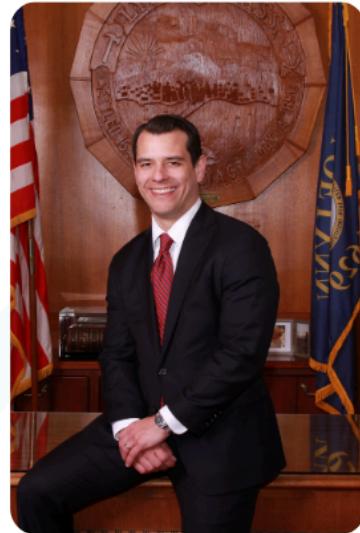
The 2024 graphic on page 15 of this report from the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General is a telling and chilling visual representation of the impact of community violence. I think about those lives from our community represented at the top of the cascade every day. Saving the next life and preventing the harm to all the other lives represented in the cascade is urgent and critical work.

As you will see in this document, we have achieved a reduction in violence in our community. But as you will also see, we need to do more to reduce violence even further and to address how violence has affected our residents' perception of safety.

Thank you to all who participated in the preparation of this plan, including Social Contract, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer and Senior Advisor in my office Faustina Cuevas, Lynn Police, Lynn Public Schools, our many community partners and all the residents and young people who shared their perspectives.

This plan appropriately acknowledges the important work that has happened and is happening, performed by the many dedicated public servants that make up the ranks of our law enforcement and various educational, social service, and community organizations. It recommends next steps on how we can do more and do it better. I look forward to working with you to move with urgency and take on this challenge together.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jared C. Nicholson

Executive Summary

Over a nine-month period, Social Contract— a Delaware-based social and collective impact consulting firm—partnered with the City of Lynn and local stakeholders to develop a community violence prevention plan.

The plan begins with a **"City of Lynn Profile"** which presents key demographic, economic, and social data that help contextualize patterns of violence while highlighting the city's assets and diversity. It showcases Lynn's racial and ethnic diversity, underscoring the importance of culturally responsive strategies to effectively address violence. Key data highlighted in this section of the plan include:

The percentage of people of color in Lynn has increased by 60% since 2010.
Lynn's Latino/a/x or Hispanic population has increased by 52% since 2010.
44% of the population identified with the Latino/a/x or Hispanic communities.
1 of 3 residents were born in another country.
After English, Spanish is the next most primary language in Lynn.
Spanish is the home language of over 60% of Lynn Public School students.
Compared with state averages, Lynn has lower rates of household income, education, employment, and home ownership.
Lynn's poverty rate and the percentage of residents without health insurance are higher than the state average.
The share of native and foreign-born individuals, as well as residents who speak a language other than English at home, is higher than the state average.

Then, **"Crime Data"** is presented to gain a clearer understanding of local trends. Notably, despite perceptions of high crime in Lynn, local data show that incidents involving firearms in the city have declined by over 47.7% between 2014 to 2024.

The **"Approach"** section of the plan provides a foundational overview of how both collective impact and public health strategies are applied to reduce community violence, as well as emphasizes collaboration with criminal justice partners to address community violence holistically.

The section on **"Guiding Principles"** showcases shared values and commitments to racial equity, collective impact, a strengths-based approach, data, evidence and accountability, and sustainability.

The plan sets a **"Vision for Lynn"** which is: *a community where safety, collaboration, opportunity, and pride are interwoven into a strong social fabric that enables all residents to thrive*. The following goals were identified to help make the vision a reality:

1.	Reduce overall rates of community violence and its impacts
2.	Enhance community well-being
3.	Strengthen community resiliency and capacity
4.	Foster collective responsibility and partnerships
5.	Promote data-driven decision-making and accountability

The **"Priorities"** section of the plan outlines strategies and activities across seven key areas showcased in the graphic below.

These priorities emphasize the reality that community violence is a complex social problem that cannot be solved through simple solutions or by any single program or organization acting alone.

Included as **"Appendices"** to the plan is an overview of the methodology used by the Social Contract team, stakeholder interview questions, youth focus group questions, insights from the stakeholder engagements, an ecosystem map, and best practice research.

Introduction

In September 2024, the City of Lynn circulated a Request for Quotes from community violence interventions or gun violence experts for a grant funded project to develop a plan to divert, prevent, and suppress behaviors that lead to gun violence, especially among young people.

Social Contract, a Delaware-based social and collective impact consulting firm, responded to the request and was selected to support the City in developing a Community Violence Prevention Plan. Social Contract has over seven years of experience managing projects related to community violence, with a portfolio that spans Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Social Contract proposed a three-phase project plan. The key activities completed during each phase of work are summarized below.

1. Project Initiation Phase
Social Contract formally launched the Project with the City and reached consensus on a scope of work and timeline.

2. Discovery Phase
Social Contract reviewed relevant materials to build on existing strengths, conducted key informant interviews and youth focus groups, as well as produced a Discovery Phase findings report and ecosystem map. The appendices include materials used to support the Discovery Phase, as well as those produced during it

3. Design Phase
Social Contract hosted a two day site visit to convene and engage local stakeholders to assist in the development of the Violence Prevention Plan.

Nine months of engaging with stakeholders resulted in the development of the Lynn Community Violence Prevention Plan. It is organized into the following sections:

Profile of City of Lynn	Provides an overview of Lynn's demographics and community context to ground the plan in local realities.
Crime Data	Summarizes historic local crime trends and patterns.
Approach	Explains collective impact and the public health approach.
Guiding Principles	Defines core values to guide implementation of the plan.
Vision for Lynn	Sets forth the long-term aspirations for public safety.
Priority Areas	Identifies the most critical focus areas where targeted investment and coordinated action can have the greatest impact.

City of Lynn Profile

The following profile is intended to ground the City of Lynn's experience with community violence in the broader context of the environment in which it occurs. By highlighting key demographic, economic, and social indicators, the profile provides a foundation for understanding the multiple factors that shape patterns of violence. Establishing this context provides a deeper understanding of the complexities, strengths, and opportunities that will be considered throughout this plan.

Race

Lynn is a racially and ethnically diverse community. Data from the World Population Review highlight the distribution of residents across racial groups.

2025 Population Count: 101,333		
White	44,976	44.57%
Other race	22,037	21.84%
Two or more races	14,866	14.73%
Black or African American	12,212	12.1%
Asian	6,059	6%
Native American	648	0.64%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	107	0.11%
Source: World Population Review. (2025). *Lynn, Massachusetts Population 2025.* Retrieved August 20, 2025, from https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/massachusetts/lynn		

To further illustrate Lynn's racial diversity, data from Lynn Public Schools shows that the percentage of students classified as minorities ranges from 63% to 100% across schools. Twenty-two schools have over 90% of their students identified as minorities.

Ethnicity

With respect to ethnicity, defined as a person's cultural identity, the Vision Lynn Comprehensive Plan notes:

- The percentage of people of color in Lynn has increased by 60% since 2010.
- Lynn's Latino/a/x or Hispanic population has increased by 52% since 2010.
- 44% of the population identified with the Latino/a/x or Hispanic communities.
- 1 of 3 residents were born in another country.
- After English, Spanish is the next most primary language in Lynn.

- Other languages spoken in Lynn include Haitian Creole, Arabic, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Khmer.

Focusing specifically on youth, data from Lynn Public Schools shows that:

67 different first languages were reported by students.	**Spanish** is the most common first language spoken after English.	**Haitian French Creole** was the third most common first language spoken.

Additional Census Data

The following chart highlights key social and economic indicators, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, providing a snapshot of Lynn's strengths and challenges while offering insight into its needs and diversity. As mentioned in the "Race" section, the data likely underrepresents communities of color and immigrant populations due to lower participation in official census counts.

|	City of Lynn	Massachusetts
Medium household income	$73,723	$99,858
Bachelors degree or higher	25.3%	47.8%
Employment rate	61.9%	64.4%
Poverty rate	12.6%	10.4%
Homeownership rate	52.3%	62.3%
Without health insurance	5%	2.6%
Language other than English spoken at home*	51.6%	25.3%
Native and foreign born	39.3%	18%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Lynn city, Massachusetts: Census profile* [Profile]. U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved August 20, 2025, from https://data.census.gov/profile/Lynn_city,_Massachusetts?g=160XX00US2537490		

Crime Data

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), community violence "happens between unrelated individuals, who may or may not know each other, generally outside of the home. Examples include assaults or fights among groups and shootings in public places."[1] Community violence also impacts a wider population beyond those directly involved. Individuals may experience the loss of a loved one to violence, the incarceration of a loved one due to a crime, or live in an environment with continuous exposure to violence.

Engaging with crime data is essential for countering common misconceptions about violence in the community. Residents often perceive violence as more widespread or frequent than it actually is, which can contribute to fear, stigma, and misinformed decision-making. By analyzing accurate crime data, communities and policymakers gain a clearer understanding of trends and patterns, fostering a more balanced and evidence-based view of local safety.

Massachusetts Crime Data

Notably, Massachusetts had the lowest gun death rate in the United States in 2023.[2]

Gun Death Rate (Per 100,000) by State in 2023

State Data: Massachusetts | Center for Gun Violence Solutions (publichealth.jhu.edu)

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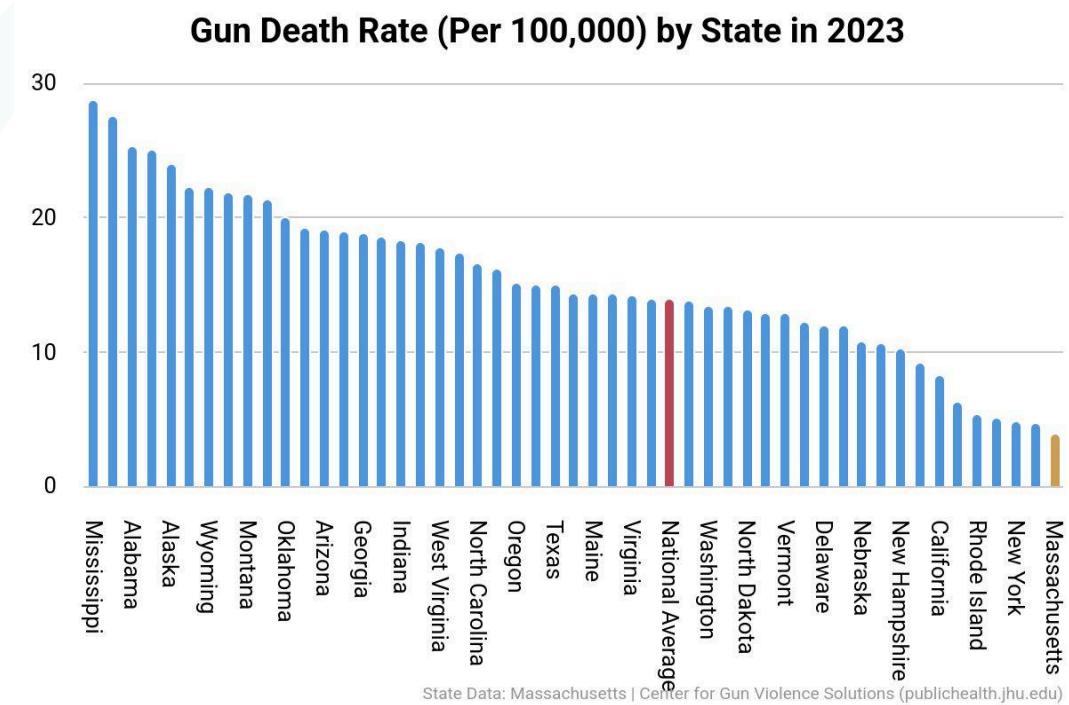
[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May 16). *About community violence*. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/community-violence/about/index.html

[2] Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (n.d.). *State data: Massachusetts*. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Retrieved September 2, 2025, from https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/gun-violence-data/state-gun-violence-data/massachusetts.

Despite Massachusetts' relatively low rates of gun violence compared to other states, the economic toll remains substantial. Gun violence costs Massachusetts residents an estimated $2.9 billion each year, equivalent to approximately $414 per person.[3]

Consistent with national trends, gun violence disproportionately affects boys and men of color. In Massachusetts, this pattern is reflected as follows[4]:

7X	**69%**	**43X**	**26%**
Males were seven times as likely to die by gun homicide than females from 2019 to 2023.	Young people ages 15-34 accounted for 69% of all gun homicides in 2023.	Black males ages 15-34 were 43 times as likely to die by gun homicide than their white counterparts from 2019 to 2023.	Hispanic/Latino males ages 15-34 accounted for 2.3% of the state population but 26% of all gun homicides in 2023.

Lynn Crime Data

To support the development of the Community Violence Prevention Plan, the Lynn Police Department provided data on firearm incidents from 2014 to 2024.

Although stakeholders reported a perception of rising violence, data from the Lynn Police Department indicate that overall crime has declined. As demonstrated in Figure A, the total number of incidents involving firearms has declined by over 47.7% from 2014 to 2024.

Figure A: Total Incidents Involving Firearms
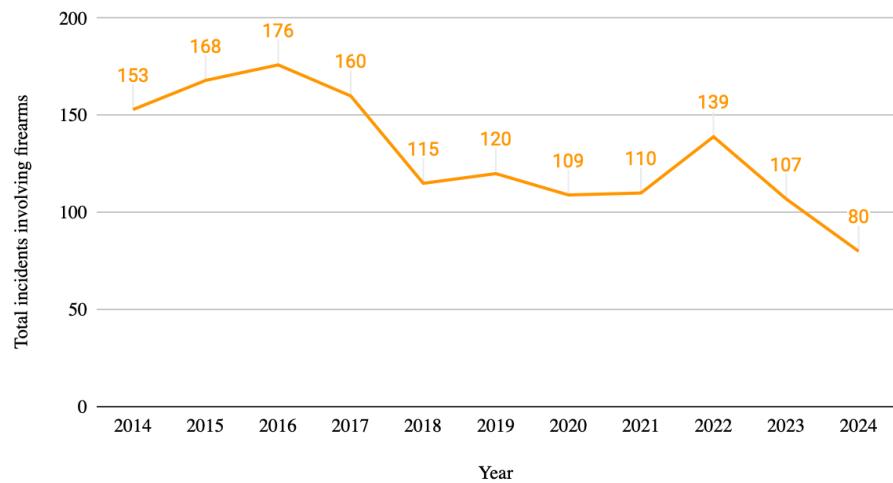
[3] Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (n.d.). *State data: Massachusetts*. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Retrieved September 2, 2025, from https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/gun-violence-data/state-gun-violence-data/massachusetts.

[4] Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (n.d.). *State data: Massachusetts*. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Retrieved September 2, 2025, from https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/gun-violence-data/state-gun-violence-data/massachusetts.

Similarly, Figure B shows a 56.8% decrease in the total number of shots fired in Lynn in 2024 compared to 2014.

Figure B: Shots Fired
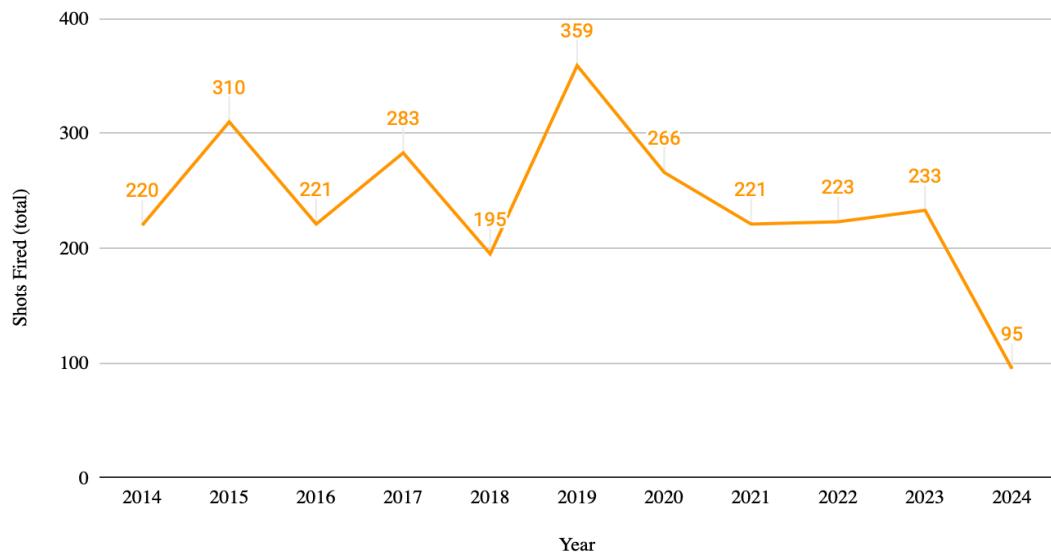
Figure C illustrates the total number of fatal and non-fatal shootings in Lynn from 2014 to 2024, highlighting how community violence can fluctuate from year to year. Despite these variations, the data show a decline in both fatal and non-fatal shootings in 2024 compared with the previous two years.

Figure C: Fatal and Non-Fatal Shootings
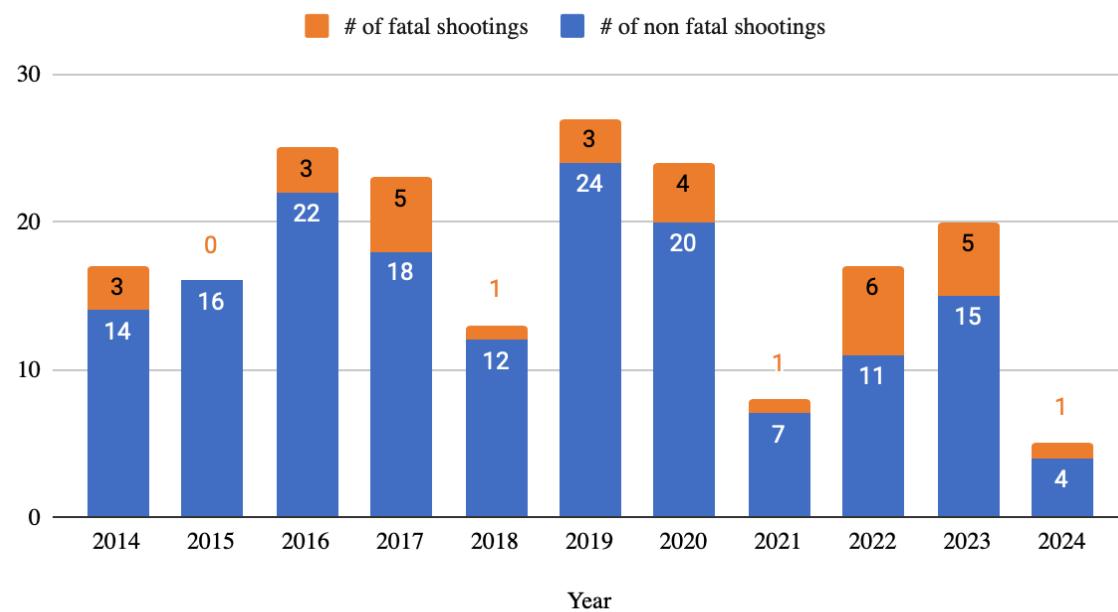
Most Impacted

The Lynn Police Department provided available demographic information on victims and suspects, including race and sex. When data on both factors were available, clear patterns emerged consistent with national trends, showing that men of color were disproportionately impacted by violence.

It is important to emphasize that this does not suggest that men of color are inherently violent. Rather, these patterns reflect underlying structural inequities that limit access to stabilizing resources. While these inequities do not diminish the community's many strengths, they can heighten vulnerability to violence, particularly for communities of color.

For example, Lynn is a vibrant and diverse community where more than half of households (51.6%) speak a language other than English at home and nearly 40% of residents are foreign-born. This diversity enriches the city with cultural knowledge, and multilingual skills. At the same time, gaps in services may emerge if resources are not linguistically accessible, providers are not culturally responsive, or trust in formal systems is lacking.

Additionally, Lynn's median household income ($73,723) is below the state's average. Although families demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness in navigating economic challenges, limited economic opportunity can create pressures that increase vulnerability to engaging in illegal survival-driven activities.

While the overwhelming majority of individuals impacted are boys and men, girls and women are also affected by violence and may require gender-specific programs to address their experiences. There is a critical need to better understand and focus on the unique experiences of girls and women affected by community violence to ensure that interventions are equitable and effective for all populations.

Firearms Recovered

During stakeholder interviews conducted for this project, the community highlighted that firearms are easily accessible in Lynn, which can contribute to incidents of violence. Figure D, shown on the next page, presents the total number of firearms recovered by law enforcement annually from 2014 to 2024. Notably, law enforcement recovered a total of 497 firearms over this 11-year period.

Figure D: Firearms Recovered
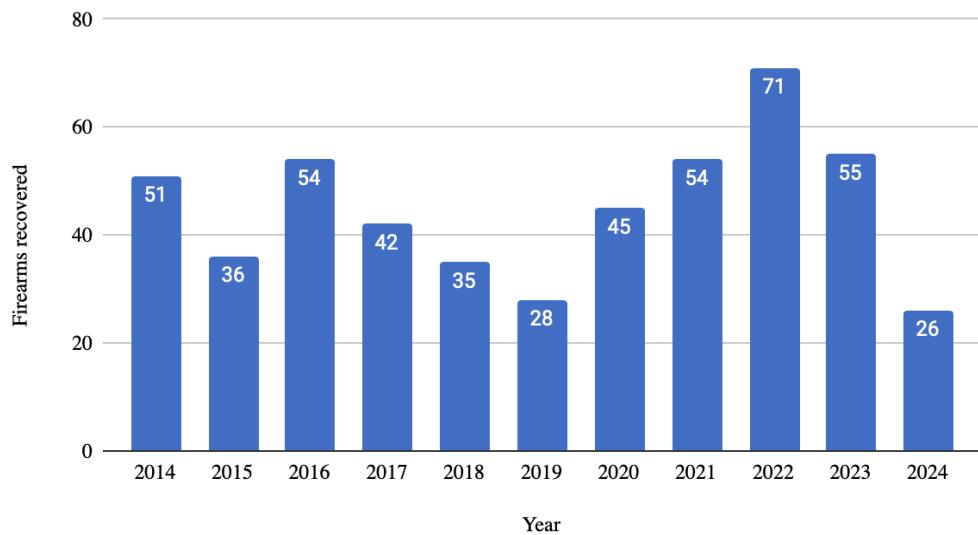
Summary

Community violence in Lynn, while often perceived as rising, has generally declined over the past decade, as reflected in data on firearm incidents, shots fired, and both fatal and non-fatal shootings. These trends demonstrate meaningful progress in reducing firearm-related incidents and enhancing public safety. Building on this momentum, the Lynn Community Violence Prevention Plan outlines priorities to sustain these positive trends and further enhance safety and well-being in the city.

Local Action Research Partner

North Shore Community College (NSCC) serves as a Local Action Research Partner (LARP) for the Lynn Shannon Community Safety Initiative. In this role, NSCC provides strategic, analytic, technical, and research support.

Readers are encouraged to contact LARP staff for more information on existing publications produced through this partnership, which offer additional in-depth analysis of local data and insights into community safety trends.

For more information, contact:

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Approach

The Lynn Community Violence Prevention Plan is grounded in the theory of collective impact and embraces a public health approach. Both frameworks are described in greater detail below.

Collective Impact

Collective impact is a structured approach to addressing complex social issues, like community violence, through cross-sector collaboration. Unlike isolated initiatives, collective impact brings together diverse organizations to work toward a shared goal, guided by five key conditions:

Condition	Description
Common Agenda	A shared vision for change, including common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon action.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Clear "swim lanes" for organizations leading strategies designed to reduce violence. Partners align and coordinate their efforts where appropriate to reduce duplication of efforts.
Shared Measurement System	Collecting data and measuring results to hold each other, and the initiative, accountable. This allows for data-driven decision making.
Continuous Communication	Consistent and open communication to keep stakeholders informed, build trust, and maintain commitment to the initiative.
Backbone Support	An individual or lead organization responsible for the initiative and coordinating participating organizations.

By fostering collaboration among stakeholders, collective impact enables systemic change that is both scalable and sustainable.

Public Health Approach

Community violence is increasingly recognized as a public health issue that demands a comprehensive public health response.

In 2024, Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a landmark U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory, declaring firearm violence in America as a public health crisis. This framing underscores that violence is not only a matter of crime, but a preventable condition that harms the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and entire communities. The graphic on the following page illustrates the cascading impact of firearm violence on society, highlighting the urgency of collective, coordinated action.

Firearm violence leads to cascading harm across society

- **Those who lose their lives to firearms**

  In 2022, **48,204** people **died** from firearm injuries, over 8,000 more lives lost than in 2019.[1]

- Those who are **injured**

  From 2019 to 2022, the mean number of weekly ED visits for firearm **injuries** were **consistently highest** among young people (15–24 years).[2]

- Those who are **direct witnesses**

  Mothers who **witness** at least one shooting in their community are up to **60%** more likely to meet criteria for depression.[3]

- Those who **lose their loved ones**

  Siblings of children and adolescents who **died** from firearm injury exhibited a **2.3-fold** increase **in psychiatric disorders**, mothers exhibited a **3.6-fold** increase, and fathers exhibited a **5.3-fold** increase.[4]

- Those who are exposed in **affected communities, including schools**

  51% of U.S. teens (ages 14-17) say they **worry** "about a shooting happening at my school or a local school near me."[5]

- Those who experience **collective trauma and fear**

  79% of U.S. adults report experiencing **stress** from the possibility of a mass shooting, while **33%** say **fear** prevents them from going to certain places or events.[6]

1. Centers for Disease Control. (2023) *National Center for Health Statistics Mortality Data on CDC WONDER.* WONDER. **2.** Zwald, M.L., Van Dyke, M.E., Chen, M.S., et al. (2023) Emergency department visits for firearm injuries before and during the COVID-19 pandemic — United States, January 2019–December 2022. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep,* 72, 333–337 **3.** Leibbrand, C., Rivara, F., & Rowhani-Rahbar, A. (2021). Gun violence exposure and experiences of depression among mothers. *Prevention Science: The Official Journal of the Society for Prevention Research,* 22(4), 523–533. **4.** Song, Z., Zubizarreta, J.R., Giuriato, M., Koh, K.A., & Sacks, C.A. (2023). Firearm injuries in children and adolescents: Health and economic consequences among survivors and family members. *Health Affairs,* 42(11). **5.** The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Everytown Research and Policy, & Polarization and Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL). (2023). U.S. youth attitudes on guns report. **6.** American Psychological Association. (2019). *One-Third of us adults say fear of mass shootings prevents them from going to certain places or events.*

Office *of the* **U.S. Surgeon General**

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Firearm violence: A public health crisis in America* [PDF]. HHS. Retrieved August 25, 2025, from https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/firearm-violence-advisory.pdf.

For decades, efforts to address community violence have largely focused on responses within the criminal justice system. While law enforcement plays an important role in ensuring safety, these approaches alone may not fully address the underlying causes or long-term effects of violence.

Public health challenges like community violence require a comprehensive approach that brings criminal justice and public health strategies together in a coordinated way. A public health approach complements the work of criminal justice partners by prioritizing prevention, healing, and the social conditions that foster safety and well-being. Together, these approaches offer a more sustainable and holistic path to reducing violence.

A public health approach to community violence can drive progress by uniting community organizations, government entities, and other key stakeholders, maximize initiative benefits, and simultaneously break cycles of violence among those directly impacted. The public health approach provides a clear framework for preventing community violence through four interconnected steps[5]:

Step One	Step Two	Step Three	Step Four
Define and Monitor the Problem Collect data from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence of violence and other key trends.	**Identify Risk and Protective Factors** Seek to understand the factors that increase or decrease the risk of experiencing or committing violence.	**Develop and Test Strategies** Use data to assess which existing strategies should be continued and which new strategies need to be developed. Evaluate effectiveness of these strategies to identify opportunities for improvement.	**Assure Widespread Adoption** Scale the most successful strategies.

When incorporated into community violence prevention plans, these steps help maximize impact by grounding efforts in data, addressing root causes, and promoting evidence-based strategies that can be scaled across communities. This systematic process ensures that responses move beyond short-term solutions toward long-term, sustainable reductions in violence.

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[5] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, April 9). *About the public health approach to violence prevention*. In *Violence Prevention*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Retrieved [today's date], from https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/about/about-the-public-health-approach-to-violence-prevention.html.

Public health strategies are commonly categorized into three levels:

Level	Description
Primary	Strategies that go "upstream" and focus on the root causes of violence before perpetration or victimization has occurred. For example, youth mentorship programs, and job training programs.
Secondary	Strategies designed to intervene or interrupt violence and/or provide immediate and short-term support after an act of violence. For example, street outreach, violence interruption, and hospital violence intervention programs.
Tertiary	Strategies that provide long-term support and/or focus on improving circumstances after an act of violence. For example, victim support services and reentry programs for previously incarcerated individuals.

When developing comprehensive strategies to reduce violence, it is critical to consider all three levels to ensure both immediate safety and lasting change.

Summary

A community violence prevention plan is strongest when it combines the structured coordination of a collective impact approach with the proven framework of a public health approach.

Collective impact ensures that diverse partners across government, community, nonprofit organizations, residents, and systems are aligned around a shared vision, common measures, and coordinated action. A public health approach provides the evidence-based strategies and prevention framework needed to address root causes, reduce risk factors, and promote protective conditions.

Together, these approaches create a comprehensive, collaborative, and sustainable pathway to reducing violence and building safer, healthier communities.

Guiding Principles

The City of Lynn's commitment to addressing community violence is rooted in the understanding that its greatest strength lies in its diversity. When the community's many voices and experiences are brought together through equity, healing, and shared responsibility, they form a strong and resilient foundation for lasting safety.

The guiding principles outlined below form the foundation for the Community Violence Prevention Plan. They reflect shared values and commitments: to center racial equity, to honor and build upon the strengths already present in the community, and to engage in authentic partnership with those most directly impacted. These principles establish clear standards for accountability, ensuring that strategies remain responsive to community voices while delivering sustainable results.

By anchoring collective efforts in these principles, partners can design, implement, and evaluate initiatives with consistency and purpose. This shared approach keeps the focus not only on reducing violence, but also on fostering a healthier, more just, and more connected community for generations to come.

Guiding Principles **for the Community Violence Prevention Plan**

Racial Equity	- We acknowledge that structural racism and inequitable systems are root drivers of community violence. - Our strategies intentionally address these inequities, ensuring resources and opportunities are equitably distributed. - We prioritize solutions that dismantle barriers faced by communities of color most impacted by violence.
Collective Impact	- We believe lasting change happens when partners align around a shared vision and work together with coordination. - We break down silos and leverage partners' strengths to achieve more together than any group could alone.
Strengths-Based	- We recognize that the community already has resilience, leadership, and deep expertise. - Our approach uplifts and invests in those that have long contributed to safety and healing. - We focus on strengthening what already works and scaling efforts with proven community ownership.
Evidence, Data, and Accountability	- We are committed to grounding our work in evidence-based practices and proven strategies that reduce violence. - Data will guide decision-making, ensuring that resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact and that progress is measured with transparency.
Sustainability	- We commit to building systems and partnerships that are durable, coordinated, and positioned to create lasting change. - Short-term interventions will be aligned with long-term strategies that shift conditions and prevent cycles of violence.

Vision for Lynn

The City of Lynn and its partners envision a community where safety, collaboration, opportunity, and pride are interwoven into a strong social fabric that enables all residents to thrive. Like a tapestry, each thread represents the unique contributions of individuals and organizations, creating a community that is both vibrant and resilient. By reinforcing these connections and building shared responsibility, the City and its partners can prevent violence, promote healing, and build a future where every person feels valued, supported, and safe.

The goals of this plan are designed to translate the vision into action. Each goal strengthens Lynn's social fabric by cultivating connections that advance safety, collaboration, opportunity, and pride.

Goals

Reduce overall rates of community violence and its impacts	• Continue to achieve measurable declines in violent incidents, including shootings, assaults, and homicides. • Focus reduction efforts on neighborhoods and populations disproportionately impacted by violence. • Reduce system inequities that continue to violence, like poverty, lack of opportunity, and limited access to support services.
Enhance community safety and well-being	• Ensure residents report feeling safer in their neighborhoods and have confidence in available support systems. • Expand and sustain evidence-based programs and services that promote community safety. • Promote policies and programs that create equitable access to resources and opportunities for all residents.
Strengthen community resiliency and capacity	• Invest in community-led initiatives that leverage local knowledge, leadership, and cultural strengths.
Foster collective responsibility and partnerships	• Build and maintain strong, coordinated networks to drive unified action. • Strengthen trust between residents and institutions working to address violence through transparent, community-informed strategies.
Promote data-driven decision-making and accountability	• Establish clear mechanisms for shared accountability, data-sharing, and continuous improvement. • Use data systems to monitor trends, evaluate interventions, and guide resource allocation. • Regularly report progress to the community, stakeholders, and policy makers to ensure transparency and responsiveness.

Priority Areas

Community violence is a complex social problem that cannot be solved by simple solutions or by any single program or organization acting alone. The Lynn Community Violence Prevention Plan is designed to achieve its vision and goals by weaving together strategies and activities across seven interconnected priority areas, with each thread contributing to a stronger, safer, and more resilient community. Best practice research on the specific strategies proposed in the priority areas is included in the appendices.

04 Integrate Law Enforcement and Alternative Responses to Violence

03 Promote Positive Youth Development

05 Address Root Causes and Structural Inequities

02 Prioritize Those Most Impacted by Violence

06 Advance Policy and Leverage Funding

01 Strengthen Collective Impact Infrastructure

7 Priority Areas

07 Leverage Data, Evaluation, and Learning

1. Strengthen Collective Impact Infrastructure

Achieving meaningful reductions in community violence requires more than isolated programs. It demands a coordinated, collective effort across all sectors of the community. Building a strong collective impact infrastructure ensures that residents, nonprofit organizations, institutions, the community, and government agencies are aligned around shared goals, common measures, and coordinated strategies.

Strategy	Activity
1.1 Identify a backbone to lead the violence reduction ecosystem	Short-Term ☐ Identify an existing city position or office to temporarily house responsibilities ☐ Define the scope of backbone functions ☐ Assign staff to manage day-to-day operations Long-Term ☐ Identify and vet potential long-term governance structures (e.g., Cabinet-level position, City-led Office of Violence Prevention) ☐ Secure funding and staffing to support backbone over the long term
1.2 Develop a brand for the initiative	Short-Term ☐ Develop compelling name for initiative that reflects the initiative's goals and values ☐ Design a simple logo and visual identity for use in communications ☐ Create branded templates ☐ Launch a basic website ☐ Upload past briefs, reports, and other relevant resources on website ☐ Produce initial outreach materials to raise awareness Long-Term ☐ Refine and expand visual identity ☐ Build comprehensive communications plan ☐ Develop community engagement campaigns ☐ Establish partnerships to amplify visibility
1.3 Establish a community violence prevention coalition	Short-Term ☐ Identify criteria for Coalition membership to ensure diverse stakeholders and representation of impacted communities ☐ Draft charter with roles, decisions-making, and accountability protocols ☐ Establish Work Groups by priority area outlined in the plan ☐ Establish a regular meeting schedule for Coalition and Work Groups ☐ Develop standing agenda for Coalition and Work Group meetings Long-Term ☐ Refine and expand Coalition governance structure ☐ Develop formal agreements with members through MOUs

1.4 Create robust communication channels	Short-Term ☐ Develop contact list of Coalition members ☐ Develop contact list of broader stakeholders to keep informed ☐ Publish monthly or quarterly newsletter to provide regular updates
1.5 Develop and implement a fundraising plan	Short-Term ☐ Define funding priorities and budget needs ☐ Assess current funding sources and identify funding gaps ☐ Develop key messaging and case statements ☐ Identify short-term funding opportunities ☐ Establish basic fundraising tracking and reporting systems Long-Term ☐ Develop comprehensive, multi-year fundraising strategy ☐ Build long-term relationships with funders, policymakers, and community stakeholders to sustain support ☐ Explore innovative funding mechanisms ☐ Measure fundraising effectiveness to inform strategy adjustments

Lynn Police Officers at Lynnside Out, Annual City-Sponsored Community Event

2. Prioritize Those Most Impacted by Violence

Research from the National Network for Safe Communities shows that less than 1% of a city's population is responsible for roughly 50% of its violence.[6] To effectively reduce community violence, it is essential to prioritize wrapping support around individuals most impacted by violence. Additionally, building the capacity of programs that engage this small segment of the population will support Lynn in addressing immediate harm while fostering long-term healing and resilience in the community.

Strategy	Activity
2.1 Establish shared definition for "most impacted"	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Draft a working definition of "most impacted" in partnership with those serving the population, including criteria and indicators ☐ Conduct a preliminary audit of current programs serving the population to assess alignment with the working definition <u>Long-Term</u> ☐ Implement regular audits of programs to ensure services are reaching the intended population
2.2 Build capacity of existing programs	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Assess current programs to identify strengths, gaps, and resource needs ☐ Provide targeted training and technical assistance to enhance skills ☐ Increase coordination and communication among existing programs to reduce duplication and improve service delivery ☐ Pilot enhancements of program models <u>Long-Term</u> ☐ Expand and sustain programs that effectively engage the population
2.3 Embed CBT into existing programs	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Provide training on CBT principles, techniques, and best practices ☐ Develop materials, manuals, and guidelines for consistent CBT delivery ☐ Pilot CBT sessions within programs <u>Long-Term</u> ☐ Fully integrate CBT into existing programs ☐ Establish ongoing professional development for staff delivering CBT
2.4 Explore feasibility of HVIP program	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Conduct research on existing HVIP models and best practices ☐ Assess potential resource requirements and funding sources ☐ Host preliminary meetings with hospitals, community partners, and funders to gauge interest and capacity

[6] Lurie, S., Acevedo, A., & Ott, K. (2018, November 14). *The less than 1%: Groups and the extreme concentration of urban violence.* National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College. https://cdn.theatlantic.com/assets/media/files/nnsc_gmi_concentration_asc_v1.91.pdf

	Long-Term ☐ Develop a detailed HVIP implementation plan ☐ Establish formal partnerships with hospitals ☐ Secure sustainable funding for program operations ☐ Pilot HVIP program
2.5 Support professionalization of the field	Short-Term ☐ Work with existing programs to standardize best practices, protocols, and ethical guidelines ☐ Create a Learning Academy for CVI professionals Long-Term ☐ Develop formal credentialing/certification pathways for CVI professionals ☐ Establish and support programs to meet minimum salary and benefit expectations for CVI professionals
2.6 Support frontline staff wellness	Short-Term ☐ Conduct a needs assessment to identify stressors and wellness gaps ☐ Offer regular training on self-care and stress management ☐ Establish peer support groups to process challenging experiences ☐ Work with programs to create policies that encourage work-life balance Long-Term ☐ Establish sustainable funding to provide ongoing access to mental health services and wellness initiatives

Bicyclists in Downtown Lynn

3. Promote Positive Youth Development

Fostering the growth of youth is a key component of preventing community violence. To effectively support youth, it is essential to provide opportunities for engagement and leadership, ensure safe spaces, build their life skills, and strengthen their support networks. By implementing programs that advance these strategies, Lynn can empower young people, increase protective factors and reduce risk factors for violence, and promote their long-term well-being and resilience.

Strategy	Activity
3.1 Provide opportunities for youth engagement and leadership	**Short-Term** ☐ Establish a youth advisory board within the initiative's coalition ☐ Offer training in public speaking, organizing events, advocacy, and related skills ☐ Organize youth-led community service and neighborhood beautification projects **Long-Term** ☐ Train youth to serve as peer mentors and conflict mediators in schools or community centers ☐ Create structured programs that prepare youth for long-term leadership roles (e.g., internships with local government, nonprofits)
3.2 Ensure safe spaces for youth	**Short-Term** ☐ Create and regularly update a directory of existing youth programs ☐ Designate community spaces as "safe zones" during high-risk times (evenings, weekends, and summers) ☐ Implement a survey to identify youth program interests ☐ Pilot a volunteer-based Safe Passage program before and after school **Long-Term** ☐ Expand youth prevention programs based on survey results ☐ Build or sustain permanent youth-focused facilities ☐ Add lighting, cameras, and visible signage around existing youth spaces ☐ Collaborate with local schools to expand and embed the Safe Passage program into regular operations
3.3. Build life skills	**Short-Term** ☐ Offer training on life skills (communication, conflict resolution, financial literacy, job readiness) ☐ Provide workshops on coping strategies and mental wellness ☐ Explore school-based gender-responsive programs such as Youth Guidance's Becoming a Man and Working on Womanhood **Long-Term** ☐ Assess feasibility of expanding the Summer Youth Employment Program into a year-round initiative ☐ Create pipelines for internships, apprenticeships, and career training

4. Integrate Law Enforcement and Alternative Responses to Violence

Effectively preventing community violence requires a coordinated approach that combines targeted law enforcement with supportive, non-punitive interventions. By integrating traditional policing strategies with alternative responses, communities can address immediate risks while promoting long-term safety and trust.

Strategy	Activity
4.1 Maintain police departments commitment to focused deterrence	**Short-Term** ☐ Conduct an updated problem analysis to identify current groups, gangs, and highly-impacted individuals ☐ Continue the Home Check initiative to connect individuals to wraparound supports
4.2 Facilitate shooting reviews	**Short-Term** ☐ Create structured process for frontline workers to regularly review shooting incidents to prevent retaliation and coordinate care
4.3 Build on success of ACE Team to integrate Handle with Care model	**Short-Term** ☐ Assess feasibility of expanding the ACE Team to integrate the Handle with Care model ☐ Establish processes for notifying schools when a child has been exposed to trauma ☐ Develop agreements allowing timely, secure sharing of relevant information between agencies ☐ Train relevant staff on Handle with Care model ☐ Inform families about the program and its goals **Long-Term** ☐ Pilot Handle with Care in selected schools to test workflows and protocols ☐ Implement data collection and monitoring to track outcomes and refine the program ☐ Expand Handle with Care across all schools
4.4 Leverage Lynn CALM Team to engage the community	**Short-Term** ☐ Partner with a local organization to host peace walks after shootings ☐ Lead barber shop talks to create informal opportunities for boys and men to connect and discuss challenges in safe spaces ☐ Lead community healing events such as healing circles ☐ Partner with the Public Health Department to host Stop the Bleed trainings in the community **Long-Term** ☐ Explore feasibility of expanding services to include street outreach in communities not currently served by existing programs

5. Address Root Causes and Structural Inequities

Communities thrive when residents have access to stable housing, quality education, meaningful employment, and culturally responsive services. By investing in strategies that enhance the built environment, expand economic and educational pathways, and support families, Lynn can further strengthen the conditions that promote health, stability, and cohesion. The following strategies and activities highlight ways to build on these assets while reducing inequities that increase vulnerability to violence.

Strategy	Activity
5.1 Strengthen the built environment	**Short-Term** ☐ Conduct and act on safety audits using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles ☐ Increase neighborhood clean-ups and beautification projects **Long-Term** ☐ Explore feasibility of securing vacant properties and lots to transform them into spaces that build community cohesion
5.2 Enhance education and workforce opportunities	**Short-Term** ☐ Expand access to GED, ESL, and vocational training programs ☐ Expand community-based workshops on career exploration, resume building, interview prep, etc. **Long-Term** ☐ Expand career pipelines into high-demand, living-wage fields ☐ Expand scholarship programs/incentives for post-secondary education
5.3 Expand housing stability and home ownership	**Short-Term** ☐ Increase financial literacy workshops/first-time homebuyer counseling ☐ Expand access to rental assistance and tenant protection services **Long-Term** ☐ Increase affordable housing development
5.4 Support families and caregivers	**Short-Term** ☐ Offer parent workshops on conflict resolution, stress management, etc. **Long-Term** ☐ Expand access to affordable childcare and early childhood education ☐ Expand access to affordable mental health services
5.5 Strengthen referral networks	**Short-Term** ☐ Establish cross-sector referral protocols to connect residents to services ☐ Train organizations on trauma-informed approaches to make referrals **Long-Term** ☐ Explore tools like Unite Us to facilitate referrals and track outcomes

6. Advance Policy and Leverage Funding

Advancing policy and leveraging funding are essential to building and sustaining effective community violence prevention efforts. Strong advocacy ensures that community priorities are reflected in city, state, and federal agendas, while dedicated funding secures the resources needed to implement lasting solutions. By engaging in policy advocacy and aligning current and new funding sources, Lynn can expand opportunities, strengthen systems, and ensure violence prevention is supported for the long term. The following strategies and activities focus on mobilizing coalitions, influencing policy change, and securing sustainable investments that address the root causes of violence.

Strategy	Activity
6.1 Engage in policy advocacy	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Research, identify and track local, state, and federal violence reduction policies ☐ Develop policy briefs and fact sheets using community data to highlight needs and proposed solutions ☐ Build coalitions to present a unified voice to policymakers <u>Long-Term</u> ☐ Advocate for city and state budgets to allocate dedicated, recurring funds for community violence prevention ☐ Push for policies that increase affordable housing, workforce development, and equitable school funding as root-cause strategies ☐ Institutionalize restorative justice, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive practices across public systems (schools, courts, healthcare)
6.2 Align current funding and identify new resources	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Map existing funding streams that support violence prevention ☐ Apply for short-term grants to fill capacity and support pilot programs ☐ Engage local businesses and philanthropic partners as early supporters <u>Long-Term</u> ☐ Build public-private partnerships that ensure sustainability beyond short-term grant cycles ☐ Develop multi-year funding commitments for violence prevention programs

7. Leverage Data, Evaluation, and Learning

Effective use of data, evaluation, and learning is essential to strengthening community violence prevention efforts. In partnership with Lynn's Local Action Research Partner (LARP), the city can establish a robust data foundation, build evaluation capacity across partners, support continuous learning, and demonstrate impact. This approach ensures community voices guide the work, interventions remain responsive and adaptive, and findings are translated into actionable insights to inform policy, secure funding, and support long-term improvements in safety. The following sections describe the short- and long-term actions we will take to put these strategies into practice

Strategy	Activity
7.1 Establish a strong data foundation	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Collect baseline data on violence, victimization, housing, education, and employment disparities ☐ Map existing data sources (schools, hospitals, law enforcement, community organizations) and identify gaps ☐ Conduct community surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions to capture resident perspectives, particularly on perceptions of violence ☐ Develop initial performance metrics <u>Long-Term</u> ☐ Create cross-sector data-sharing agreements with key partners ☐ Develop a centralized community violence prevention dashboard accessible to stakeholders ☐ Use GIS mapping to track hotspots and monitor the impact of environmental and programmatic interventions
7.2 Build evaluation capacity across partners	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Train staff and partners in trauma-informed and culturally responsive evaluation practices ☐ Support all partners in developing a theory of change and logic model ☐ Create simple evaluation tools (pre/post surveys, focus group guides) for immediate feedback <u>Long-Term</u> ☐ Establish a dedicated evaluation team or unit within the initiative ☐ Institutionalize evaluation requirements in all funded programs ☐ Provide ongoing training and technical assistance to build local evaluation expertise
7.3 Support continuous learning and adaption	<u>Short-Term</u> ☐ Launch quick feedback loops (post-program surveys, rapid evaluations) to adjust programs in real time ☐ Hold quarterly reflection sessions with partners to share findings and adapt strategies

	Share data with residents in accessible formats (multilingual dashboards, community forums) Long-Term ☐ Adopt a collective impact or results-based accountability framework to align efforts across partners ☐ Establish annual community learning forums to review data, celebrate successes, and refine priorities ☐ Embed continuous learning practices into governance structures
7.4 Demonstrate impact to drive policy and funding	Short-Term ☐ Publish early success stories and impact briefs to build momentum ☐ Use simple metrics to show funders and policymakers initial returns on investment Long-Term ☐ Conduct rigorous evaluations to measure outcomes (e.g., reduction in shootings, improved school attendance, increased employment). ☐ Use cost-benefit analyses to demonstrate financial savings from prevention compared to incarceration, hospitalization, and policing. ☐ Translate findings into policy briefs and advocacy campaigns to secure long-term funding.

Haitian Flag Raising at City Hall

Closing

Through the combined efforts of government, nonprofits, community leaders, law enforcement, the health sector, schools, local businesses, and residents, Lynn is building a resilient foundation of safety and community.

This plan provides a roadmap for collaboration, demonstrating that through open dialogue, authentic partnerships, and shared commitment, every contribution within the violence reduction ecosystem plays a meaningful role in lasting change.

Progress may be gradual, and challenges will arise, but each collective effort adds strength and depth to the community's fabric and brings Lynn closer to a future where opportunity, safety, and peace are part of daily life.

The plan reflects the community's dedication to supporting those most affected by violence while building a culture of accountability, care, and resilience. The progress already achieved shows that collective impact is both possible and within reach.

Just as a tapestry gains strength from the interweaving of many threads, the City of Lynn's continued progress will depend on nurturing strong relationships, practicing reflection, and sustaining resilience. By honoring what has already been built and leaning on one another, the community can create a safer environment where all residents can thrive.

Mayor's Office wall with flags representing the languages spoken in Lynn

Appendix A: Methodology

Purpose and Approach

Social Contract's work with the City of Lynn focused on understanding both how residents perceive community violence and how they experience it in their daily lives. The effort also sought to capture perspectives on past responses, current initiatives, and aspirations for the future. To achieve this, a mixed-methods research approach was employed to capture a more comprehensive view of the issue and to reflect on its complexity and deeply personal nature.

Quantitative analysis was conducted through a review of existing crime data, which provided insight into trends and patterns of violence. Qualitative data was gathered through stakeholder interviews and focus groups with local stakeholders who hold critical knowledge of the violence reduction ecosystem. Together, these methods allowed for triangulation of data, enhancing both the depth and validity of the findings that informed the development of the Community Violence Prevention Plan.

In the stakeholder interviews and focus groups, Social Contract used a set of open-ended questions designed to surface insights across three main areas:

1. Problem Definition	Explored how stakeholders define and experience community violence, including patterns among victims and perpetrators, geographic concentration, underlying drivers, and its personal and community-wide impacts.
2. Violence Reduction Ecosystem	Examined past and present efforts to address community violence, including strengths, funding, effectiveness, challenges, influential individuals/groups, collaboration, and opportunities to strengthen the violence reduction ecosystem.
3. Strategies for Creating a Violence Prevention Plan	Gathered ideas and recommendations from stakeholders about what actions, programs, or practices should be prioritized to reduce community violence locally.

The complete list of research questions used in the stakeholder Interviews and youth focus group can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

Design

The quantitative research design employed a combination of key informant interviews and focus groups, creating space for both personal reflection and group dialogue. The key informant interviews provided participants with a private setting to share their personal experiences and insights, while the focus groups facilitated conversation and collective meaning-making among peers. Together, these methods helped gain a

deeper understanding of how community violence is experienced and perceived across different groups, surfacing both shared themes and unique viewpoints.

I. Participant Recruitment

In partnership with the City, Social Contract developed a stakeholder list for Key Informant Interviews. Social Contract and the City employed a purposeful sampling strategy to ensure the inclusion of the voices of individuals directly affected by community violence. This strategy necessitated reaching out to professionals working in public safety, education, youth services, and behavioral health. To help ensure the process did not miss any voices, Social Contract also used a snowball sampling approach, which involved asking participants to recommend others who should be interviewed. This approach helped surface additional partners who were not on the original list but whose perspectives were vital to understanding the whole picture.

In total, the City and Social Contract identified 26 individuals for interviews through the stakeholder list and the snowball sampling approach. Of those, 19 individuals met with Social Contract to share their insights.

Social Contract partnered with Lynn Public Schools, Lynn Public Health, and LYSOA to recruit youth and young adult participants for focus groups using a convenience sampling approach. In total, twenty-seven participants between the ages of 14 and 23 took part in one of three focus groups. An additional group of community members, recruited by Pastor Caceres, participated in a focus group conducted in Spanish. Incorporating the voices of youth and residents, particularly those with lived experience of or proximity to community violence, was critical to ensuring their perspectives were meaningfully reflected in the Community Violence Prevention Plan.

II. Data Collection Methods

Data collection involved a series of interviews and a focus group, held over Zoom or in-person. The interviews and focus groups lasted between 30 minutes and an hour, with each participant attending only one session. After data collection concluded, researchers had available interview and focus group recordings transcribed to support a more efficient and accurate review of responses during the analysis phase.

To maintain structure while encouraging organic discussion, Social Contract utilized facilitation guides that outlined the core research questions. Conversations remained flexible, allowing participants to share additional insights beyond the predefined questions. Researchers were able to record the majority of interviews, supporting accurate note-taking and capturing key insights. For sessions that researchers were not able to record, facilitators took detailed notes during the conversations.

III. Data Analysis Process

Social Contract employed an inductive approach, with thematic analysis guiding the coding of data and the identification of key themes. Rather than starting with a set

theory or assumption, this approach allows patterns, themes, and insights to emerge directly from what participants shared, enabling the findings to remain grounded in the real experiences and voices of those most closely affected by the issue.

To manage and make sense of the large amount of narrative data collected, Social Contract used analysis software to organize and code the transcribed interviews and focus groups. The team took extra care to ensure consistency, accuracy, and depth in interpreting the data by working closely together to review coding decisions, talk through different interpretations, and align on major themes. This collaborative approach helped strengthen the validity of the findings and reduce individual bias.

IV.   Limitations

While the approach provided valuable insights, limitations should be acknowledged.

A. **Small Sample Size**
There was a relatively small sample size in comparison to the total population of the City of Lynn. The findings may not fully capture the range of opinions across all community members and other stakeholders. To mitigate this reality, Social Contract, with assistance from the City, sought to intentionally include a range of stakeholders from different systems and youth perspectives to broaden the scope of voices represented.

B. **Institutional Lens**
The majority of stakeholders interviewed came from institutional backgrounds (e.g., government, education sector, etc.). This may have influenced responses toward a systems-oriented lens. To balance this, the project team incorporated voices from community-based organizations, youth, and community members to offer additional perspectives beyond formal systems.

C. **Reflection of a Point-in-Time**
The findings presented represent a snapshot in time, reflecting the context, sentiments, and experiences at the moment of data collection. These may shift as community conditions evolve or current events unfold.

D. **Subjectivity**
As with all qualitative research, there is an inherent level of subjectivity—both in what participants chose to share and in how the project team interpreted the information. The findings reflect the perspectives of the participants, which may not always align with objective facts. Still, it is essential to acknowledge that people's perceptions are often influenced by their lived realities, and even if not objectively verifiable, these insights provide valuable windows into their experiences. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, Social Contract used structured coding practices to minimize individual bias during analysis.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Questions

Violence Dynamics

General

1. Have you heard about the 2024 Lynn Gang Assessment Report developed by the North Shore Community College? If so, did you participate in its related survey?
2. How would you describe or define community violence?
3. How does it manifest in Lynn?
4. From your perspective, what are the main drivers of violence in Lynn? What are the main impacts?
5. Are there specific areas in the city that are most affected by these dynamics?
6. What patterns have you noticed among those affected by it (victims and communities)?
7. Are there any noticeable patterns or shared experiences among those involved in community violence, particularly the individuals driving violence or perpetrating it?

Group/Gang Violence

8. In your experience, how much of the recent violence in Lynn appears to be connected to group or gang-related activity?
9. Do you think the recent dismantling of the Trinitarios will affect violence dynamics and the solutions implemented to prevent or reduce it?
10. What factors or experiences might influence people's involvement in group dynamics or activities associated with these groups, and especially youth?
11. Since you answered the North Shore Gang Assessment questions, have there been any changes in the landscape of community violence in Lynn?

Social Determinants of Health

12. What family, community, or broader social factors do you believe might create barriers for youth in navigating away from or disengaging from situations involving violence?
13. From your perspective, how do these housing and economic changes relate to services access, broader community dynamics and violence dynamics, if at all?

Firearms

14. Have you observed changes in the availability of firearms in Lynn? If so, what do you think it's driving it? How do you think this has impacted (if at all) community safety and violence dynamics?

Approaches to Address Violence

Current Approaches

1. To your knowledge, who is currently working to address violence in the city and how?
2. Could you describe the ways in which you/ your organization contribute to this work?
3. What have the outcomes of your and the collective work been?
4. What challenges do stakeholders working on this topic face and how does that impact their work?
5. Where are there opportunities for growth?
6. Are there gaps in the violence reduction ecosystem in the city? What gaps?
7. Are there any other specific strategies, programs, initiatives, or promising practices that you're aware of and you think should be implemented in the city or be a part of a violence reduction plan? Why?

Past Approaches

8. In the past, what approaches were taken to address violence?
9. What was effective and/or ineffective about these approaches?
10. Are any of these approaches still implemented?
11. If not, or just a few, why did these efforts end and what were the consequences of them ending?

Youth-Specific Approaches

12. Who are the key influencers of youth and young adults?
13. What role do they/could they play in violence reduction efforts?
14. What opportunities exist for youth in Lynn to connect with positive role models and community programs?

Collaboration

15. How familiar are you with the Lynn CALM Team: The City's unarmed, alternative to police response for non-violent concerns? In what ways, if at all, do you see their work complementing broader public safety efforts in Lynn?
16. Are there areas in the public/community safety field where communication and collaboration could be improved, especially beyond specific grant-related work?
17. How do you think the Lynn CALM Team model, as an alternative response to non-violent concerns, could influence coordination between existing stakeholders and programs? Do you see any indirect impacts it might have on broader public safety strategies, including violence reduction efforts?

Community Feedback

18. In what ways do you see existing programs in Lynn incorporating community voices, feedback, and values like equity, inclusivity, and sustainability?
19. Where do you think there might be opportunities for further growth on this topic?

Development of A Violence Reduction Plan

1. From your perspective, what must be true to ensure the violence reduction work in the city is coordinated, effective and sustainable (financially and time-wise)?
2. It seems that the violence reduction efforts in Lynn are funded through a mix of state and city resources, as well as grants from foundations and other organizations. What funding sources are you aware of, or do you think could be leveraged to further support these initiatives?
3. Who do you think should be involved in shaping or leading a plan to reduce community gun violence in the city?
4. What kind of governance structure do you think would best support the coordination and implementation of such a plan?
5. Who has not been engaged in violence reduction efforts yet but should be in the future and why have they been disengaged?
6. What key factors would be necessary for the various violence reduction efforts in Lynn to come together and align under a single plan or strategy?

Appendix C: Youth Focus Group Questions

Icebreaker

1. My name is ___. I am ___ years old. One thing I like about living here is ___.

Assets

1. Are there any specific clubs, organizations, or activities that are doing a really good job helping young people feel safe and supported? Tell us more about what they're doing well.
2. Where in the community do you feel the safest? Why?
3. What do you think your community or school does well to prevent violence?
4. Who is someone in your community or school you think more people should listen to?

Gaps

1. What kind of things make it harder for youth to participate in programs or activities for youth in the community or school?
2. What are some things that make you or your friends feel unsafe in your community or school?
3. What could your community or school do better to help prevent violence?
4. What new programs or spaces do you think should exist for youth in your community or school?

Violence Dynamics

1. What type of violence have you seen or heard about in the community?
2. Are some people more involved in or affected by violence than others? If yes, who?
3. Do you see violence happening more in some places than others? If yes, where?
4. What do you think causes violence?
5. Do you know of any programs or people that work to prevent violence?
6. What are they doing well and what could they do better?
7. What more do you think should be done to stop violence?

Strategies to Address Violence

We'd like to hear your thoughts on a few ideas to stop violence. We're going to tell you an idea and you're going to rate it using a stop light system. Red means you think the idea is not good or won't work. Yellow means the idea could be good or bad. Green

means you think the idea is good and will work. We'll ask you to explain why you chose the color you selected.

- School assemblies
- Free after school programs
- Increased police presence in the community or school
- Helping people learn how to solve problems without fighting
- Programs where young people help lead and support each other

Now, we'd like you to imagine that you are the Mayor for the day. What is one thing that you would change, add, or do to make your city better?

- Facilitator Note: Have youth report out their answer and explain their selection. Then, have the youth vote on the best idea using "dotmocracy"." At the end, tally up the votes to see which one wins.

Appendix D: Insights from Discovery Phase

This section highlights key findings from the Discovery Phase, drawing on insights gathered through stakeholder interviews and youth focus groups. These findings provided a foundation for understanding community perspectives and informing the priorities areas identified in the community violence prevention plan.

How Violence is Defined

It is critical to establish a shared understanding of what constitutes community violence. Without this common foundation, stakeholders may work from different assumptions about root causes, affected populations, and appropriate interventions, which can ultimately undermine coordinated efforts and dilute potential impact.

According to stakeholders, community violence:

- encompasses a broad spectrum of harmful behaviors and conditions that disrupt community peace, well-being, and sense of safety;
- includes not only direct physical acts like shootings, stabbings, and assaults, but also environmental damage, psychological impacts, and systemic conditions that create harm;
- creates ripple effects beyond direct victimization, impacting families, witnesses, perpetrators, and the broader community through cycles of trauma and retaliation; and
- is distinct from domestic violence; however, domestic violence was identified as a related concern that often intersects with community violence.

Gang Violence

Stakeholders agreed that gang violence was the most concerning and visible manifestation of community violence. According to the Lynn Police Department and North Shore Community College, there are approximately 10 to 15 active gangs with an estimated number of 200 gang members and roughly 300 to 400 associates.[7] However, only a fraction of these members, approximately "50 to 60 individuals," are

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[7] Centeno, G. C., Koshivas, A., Roesler, R., & D'Agostino, F. (2024, May). *Lynn community gang assessment report, 2024*. North Shore Community College.

actively involved in violence. This observation aligns with research showing that a very small percentage of individuals drive the majority of violent incidents.[8]

Multiple stakeholders identified the Trinitarios as a particularly significant gang presence before the recent enforcement operation, though several other gangs and groups operate throughout the city.

Public health officials and community organization representatives generally agreed that gang violence usually involves specific targets rather than random victims. Several stakeholders noted they personally felt safe in Lynn because they understood gang violence was typically directed at rival gang members, not the general public. However, stakeholders universally recognized that even targeted gang violence creates widespread community impact through fear, territorial divisions, and the trauma experienced by residents who witness violence or its aftermath.

Stakeholders across sectors identified what they described as a deeply concerning trend in the increasing involvement of younger adolescents in gang violence. Law enforcement and criminal justice representatives discussed how younger individuals are committing more serious violent crimes, particularly homicides. Social service providers expressed particular concern about the middle school age group, which they identified as especially vulnerable to negative influences.

COMMUNITY VOICES

"Outside one of our middle schools, we actually have gang members who sort of post outside, and that's sort of their recruitment area."

Drivers of Violence

Stakeholders expressed their opinions on potential drivers of violence in Lynn, noting that no single factor fully explains it. These drivers are not unique to Lynn; rather, they reflect national trends that municipalities across the country are also confronting. The following factors, each interacting in complex ways, were highlighted:

Driver	Summary
Structural conditions	Factors like concentrated poverty, overcrowded schools, lack of affordable quality housing, limited transportation, and declining infrastructure were identified as creating conditions where violence is more likely to occur. Stakeholders felt that when opportunities are scarce and financial pressures are high, some people may see illegal activities as one of the few ways to get by or get ahead.

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[8] Lurie, S., et al. (2018, November 14). *The less than 1%: Groups and the extreme concentration of urban violence.* National Network for Safe Communities, John Jay College. https://cdn.theatlantic.com/assets/media/files/nnsc_gmi_concentration_asc_v1.91.pdf.

Access to firearms	Firearms were seen as a key factor in the severity of violence. Stakeholders perceived increasing numbers of youth carrying weapons and post-pandemic rises in both legal and illegal firearms. Stakeholders also raised concern about technological developments, such as devices that convert semi-automatic guns to fully automatic, which heighten the potential for harm.
Developmental factors	Stakeholders noted that violence is strongly influenced by developmental factors. Youth's heightened susceptibility to peer pressure, impulsivity, and risk-taking were identified as increasing their involvement in violent behavior. Stakeholders felt middle school-aged youth were particularly vulnerable, since their decision-making skills and judgment are still developing, making them targets for gang recruitment and high-risk activities.
Sense of belonging	Stakeholders observed that youth may be drawn to gang involvement not only to gain social status but also to find connection and support often lacking in their families or communities, making gangs a way to meet both social, emotional needs, and economic needs. One stakeholder shared, *"A gang can put you up, give you money, give you food. Then leaving the gang means losing everything - security, food, shelter, family."*
Social media	Social media was consistently identified as a major driver of youth violence, noting that young people use platforms to glorify firearms, promote gang activity, and arrange drug sales. Emerging platforms like Telegram pose additional challenges, as parents and adults often lack awareness of how youth navigate these spaces.
"Codes of the street" and distrust of authorities	Multiple stakeholders described unwritten community norms that discourage cooperation with authorities and can perpetuate cycles of violence. Research partners and law enforcement noted that, in some neighborhoods, residents are reluctant to report crimes or cooperate with investigations due to fear of retaliation or general distrust of authorities. Stakeholders also highlighted how recent federal immigration enforcement activities have heightened barriers to reporting crimes and seeking help, particularly in Latino communities. Faith leaders and immigrant service providers emphasized that *"many people, especially immigrants, feel vulnerable when reporting violence or harassment. Even though [Lynn] police do not inquire about immigration status, many assume reporting could put them at risk or draw unwanted attention."*
Generational cycles	Generational cycles of violence and certain family circumstances, such as absent parents or youth taking on adult responsibilities, can increase vulnerability and risk of involvement in violence.
Substance use	Substance use was identified as a major driver of violence in Lynn, both through gang-related drug trade conflicts and as a personal risk factor for future violent behavior. Stakeholders noted that

	substance use often precedes involvement in more serious violence, creating a pathway for escalating risk.

Impacts of Community Violence

Despite the fact that firearm related crimes have been declining in Lynn, a recurring theme among stakeholders was the impact of community violence on residents' perceptions of safety. While some stakeholders observed that impacts may vary by demographics, neighborhood, and personal connection to violent incidents, the perception that violence occurs more frequently than it actually does persists.

Stakeholders noted that fear of community violence can limit mobility and access for many young people in Lynn, which in turn may disconnect them from existing resources intended to serve as protective factors against violence.

To that end, stakeholders emphasized that incorporating measures of perceived safety is equally essential to a comprehensive public safety strategy as the monitoring of official statistics and the use of data to guide decision-making.

The second most frequently cited impact by stakeholders was the individual and collective trauma resulting from direct experiences with, or ongoing exposure to, community violence.

Stakeholders described how experiencing or witnessing violence alters perceptions of safety and healthy relationships, making survivors more vulnerable to revictimization and reducing their ability to assess risk accurately. Others noted that unaddressed trauma often manifests as anger and retaliatory behavior when youth lack healthy processing mechanisms.

COMMUNITY VOICES
"When harm is directed at youth, the young people especially get very, very angry. And, you know, they act out in retaliation because they don't have any other means of handling the disappointment, the fear, the harm, the trauma."

Existing Assets to Address Community Violence

The recent declines in firearm-related crimes in Lynn reflect the strength of the city's established community violence prevention ecosystem. Unlike municipalities starting from the ground up, Lynn benefits from a robust infrastructure, which will be further strengthened through the implementation of a codified violence prevention plan and the added coordination of a backbone partner to better align the ecosystem.

Though the city continues to grapple with challenges related to community violence, stakeholders consistently highlighted existing assets that can be leveraged in ongoing

efforts to improve perceptions of safety and build safer communities. The following section highlights existing assets to address community violence.

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Programs serving highly impacted individuals and communities	Stakeholders identified organizations like LYSOA, ROCA, LifeScene, and Catholic Charities as current programs that provide services to young people impacted by violence through street outreach, crisis intervention, case management and lifeskill development.
Prevention programs that provide safe spaces for youth	The Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc., and the YMCA were noted by stakeholders for offering structured recreational and educational activities designed to provide positive alternatives to violence.
Law enforcement strategies	Stakeholders highlighted law enforcement initiatives underway like community policing, gang units, the Home Check program, and collaborative enforcement efforts with state and federal agencies. Additionally, law enforcement are trained in ROCA Rewire, attend community meetings to provide updates on public safety, coordinate community engagement events, purchased an ice cream truck to have positive interactions with the community, and support the teen center in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department.
School-based supports	Stakeholders noted the expansion of school-based mental health services through partnerships between Lynn Public Schools and the Lynn Community Health Center as a significant advancement in early intervention. Embedded clinicians support youth experiencing trauma, behavioral challenges, and other risk factors before problems escalate. The clinicians respond quickly to emerging situations, build ongoing relationships with students, and coordinate with teachers and administrators to create supportive environments.
Dedicated resources that promote coordination	The Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant and the state's Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) grant were noted as dedicated resources that have bolstered Lynn's violence prevention ecosystem. These funding streams have facilitated coordination among grantees through monthly "system of care" meetings that bring together partners to share information, resources, and discuss needs.
Youth summer employment program	Stakeholders praised the Mayor's commitment to guarantee job opportunities to any interested young person as a critical component of the violence prevention ecosystem. This program offered youth structured engagement, connection to positive adult mentors, income opportunities, and skill development that supported their long-term educational and professional goals.
Lynn CALM Team	Although not fully operational at the time of the interviews, the CALM Team was identified as a promising approach to non-violent crisis response. Stakeholders noted its potential to free police resources for addressing violent crime, provide more appropriate responses to behavioral health needs, mediate conflicts at early stages, connect residents with resources, and help bridge trust gaps between marginalized communities and law enforcement.

Opportunities to Further Strengthen the Ecosystem

Lynn's existing infrastructure, partnerships, and programs provide a solid foundation upon which to build, and ongoing coordination and targeted enhancements can amplify its effectiveness. This section highlights stakeholder-identified opportunities to build on Lynn's existing assets and further foster safer communities.

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Increase capacity of existing programs	Stakeholders highlighted significant capacity constraints across youth-serving programs, including long waitlists and gaps in services due to space, staffing, and funding limitations. Providers across sectors reported operating at or near maximum capacity, particularly for free or low-cost programs, limiting access for many young people. This concern was highlighted by one stakeholder regarding the number of youth on waiting lists: *"We have 225 kids [on a waiting list]... So when you have waitlists, where do those 225 [kids] go? No one can answer that."* To address these challenges, stakeholders recommended expanding the capacity of programs through increased funding and staffing, as well as enhancing partnerships to better coordinate services.
Increase access to and utilization of existing programs and services	A consistent theme across stakeholder groups was the disconnect between available services and the people who need them most. One stakeholder shared, *"Lynn is rich with resources... we have all these resources, but if you don't know that they exist, you can't access them."* To increase access and use of existing resources, stakeholders suggested that providers diversify how they share information with the community. The City offers a strong model, leveraging multiple communication channels and translating content to ensure information is accessible to those who speak languages other than English. Transportation also emerged as a significant barrier to accessing and utilizing services. To address this barrier, stakeholders proposed ensuring there are programs located throughout the city and offering shuttle bus services so that youth could reach programs outside of their immediate neighborhoods. Finally, recognizing cost as a barrier, stakeholders highlighted the need for expanded availability of free or low-cost programs.
Prioritize staff well-being and provide opportunities for professional growth	Stakeholders highlighted challenges related to recruiting and retaining qualified staff, noting that salaries in the violence prevention field often do not reflect the demands and stress of the work. High turnover, particularly among youth service providers, disrupts relationships with vulnerable young people who benefit from stability and consistent support. Additionally, concerns for staff well-being were emphasized, given the intensity of working with communities affected by violence.

	To address these challenges, stakeholders recommended strategies such as offering competitive compensation, investing in professional development opportunities, and providing robust support and self-care resources for frontline staff.
Expand male engagement in behavioral health and mentorship	Stakeholders expressed appreciation for investments in school-based behavioral health services. However, youth highlighted that most providers identify as female and boys, who are disproportionately impacted by violence, might feel more comfortable accessing services from male providers. As one youth remarked, *"How can guys express their feelings if they don't have a guy to talk to?"* To address this, stakeholders recommended strategies to increase the number of licensed male providers, train community mentors to serve as positive male role models, and create informal opportunities for boys to connect and discuss challenges in safe spaces identified by men in the community, such as local barber shops.
Expand behavioral health supports in the community	Stakeholders highlighted gaps in community-based behavioral health support and felt that expanding support within the broader community can complement school-based services by reaching youth who may be disconnected from school, provide an outlet for adults to access services, and provide culturally responsive care for immigrant and other underserved communities. To better serve individuals who may not engage with traditional service models, there is an opportunity to incorporate diverse strategies, including healing circles, peer support networks, and culturally responsive workshops. These approaches provide safe spaces for youth to process trauma, build resilience, and strengthen connections with trusted adults and peers.
Develop referral systems	Youth service providers emphasized the importance of improved referral systems and warm handoffs between organizations to ensure that vulnerable individuals do not fall through gaps in the service system. While some sectors face challenges in sharing information due to confidentiality requirements, there are clear opportunities to develop robust referral processes that connect individuals to the services they need.
Provide leadership opportunities for youth and immigrant communities	Stakeholders emphasized the importance of creating leadership opportunities that ensure equitable inclusion of community voices, particularly from youth and immigrant communities, in violence reduction planning and implementation. There are opportunities to identify and engage authentic community leaders who can serve as bridges between formal systems and community members. Additionally, youth service providers strongly advocated for meaningful youth leadership in planning and decision-making, noting that young people bring unique insights and potential solutions that adult professionals may overlook.

Stakeholders also emphasized the need for inclusive processes that reflect diverse languages, cultural perspectives, and communication styles. They observed that conventional meeting formats and bureaucratic procedures often exclude those most affected by violence, underscoring the importance of creating accessible, culturally responsive opportunities for leadership and engagement.
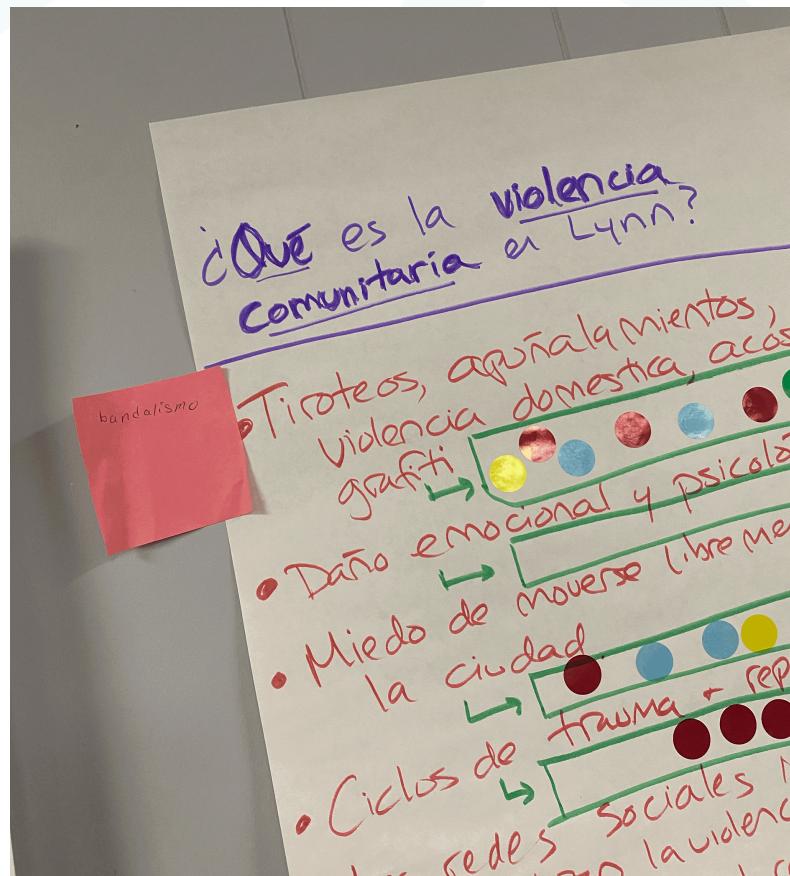
Photos from the community meeting facilitated in Spanish to gather input on the violence prevention plan

Appendix E: Ecosystem Map

Law Enforcement
- Office of Essex County District Attorney
- Lynn Police Department
- Essex County Sheriff's Department
  - STAR Program

Social Services
- LEO, Inc.
- My Brother's Table
- Justice Resource Institute
  - Children's Friend and Family Services
- Northeast Legal Aid
- Haven Project
- Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC)
- Catholic Charities North

Violence Intervention Program
- LYSOA
- ROCA

Youth/Community Serving
- Stop the Violence
- Camp Fire North Shore
- Girls Inc
- Boys & Girls Club
- Raw ArtWorks
- Lynn Rapid Response network
- LifeScene
- YMCA
- Maria Latina Center

Lynn Massachusetts Community Violence Ecosystem Map

Education
- North Shore Community College
- Lynn Public Schools
  - District Schools
  - School Based Health Ceners
  - School Committee
- Pathways
- Gregg House

Health
- Eliot Community Human Service (Eliot CHS)
  - Family Resource Center
  - Juvenile Justice Residences
  - Behavioral Health Unit
  - Mobile Crisis Intervention
  - Tri City Area CBHC
- BayRidge Hospital

Government
- City of Lynn
  - Office of the Mayor
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Public Health Department
    - CALM Team
  - City Council
- MA General Assembly
- MassHire North Shore Workforce Investment Board
- Lynn Housing and Neighborhood Development
- State of MA
  - Commonwealth Corporation
  - Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
    - Shannon CSI
  - Deptartment of Public Health
  - Executive Office of Health and Human Services
    - SSYI
- Economic Development Industrial Corporation

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Appendix F: Best Practice Research

This section highlights best practice research to provide additional guidance on strategies that can strengthen community violence prevention. By drawing on evidence from successful initiatives nationwide, Lynn can adapt proven approaches to fit local needs and build on existing community strengths.

Cognitive Behavioral Approaches	Cognitive behavioral approaches can play an important role in reducing community violence. Non-therapeutic interventions, such as life skills workshops or group programs, help people build problem-solving, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution skills that lower the risk of violent behavior. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), delivered in therapeutic settings, provides more intensive support by addressing thought patterns and behaviors linked to aggression or trauma. Together, these approaches strengthen individual coping skills, reduce harmful reactions, and promote safer choices, contributing to broader violence prevention efforts. Stakeholders in Lynn are already using cognitive behavioral approaches, such as ROCA's Rewire training. This work can be expanded to ensure that all programs across the ecosystem are grounded in and consistently applying these practices. For more information, visit: https://rocainc.org.
Hospital Violence Intervention	Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) play a key role in reducing community violence by reaching survivors of violent injury at a critical "teachable moment." These programs connect patients with intensive case management, counseling, and social services while they are recovering in the hospital. By addressing the root causes of violence and breaking cycles of retaliation, HVIPs have been shown to reduce reinjury and re-hospitalization, improve health outcomes, and strengthen trust between communities and service systems. Examples of impact from HVIPs nationwide include:[9] • The Wraparound Project in San Francisco recorded a 50% reduction in reinjury, with only 4% of clients re-injured over ten years. • Baltimore's HVIP saw only 5% of participants rehospitalized, compared to 36% in a control group, generating nearly $600,000 in healthcare savings. • An HVIP at Virginia Commonwealth University found that at six months, patients who received intervention had decreased rates of alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use. • In Philadelphia, survivors served by all six Level One Trauma Centers were three times less likely to be arrested for a violent crime, four times less likely to be convicted of that crime, and twice as unlikely to be convicted of any crime, compared to those without HVIP services.

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[9] Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. (n.d.). *Our impact*. Retrieved September 6, 2025, from https://www.thehavi.org/our-impact.

	The Lynn Police Department has established relationships with trauma centers that care for local firearm violence victims. Building on these connections, there is an opportunity to partner with community-based nonprofits serving highly impacted individuals and expand services to include hospital-based interventions. For more information, visit: www.thehavi.org/what-is-an-hvip. To explore a local example, visit the Boston Medical Center's HVIP website: www.bmc.org/violence-intervention-advocacy-program.
Safe Passages	Safe Passages programs help reduce community violence by providing supervised, supportive routes for children and youth traveling to and from school. These programs often employ trained staff, community volunteers, and local partners to monitor high-risk areas, mediate conflicts, and connect young people with positive resources. By increasing adult presence, improving safety in public spaces, and fostering relationships between youth and trusted community members, Safe Passages programs can lower the risk of violence, promote positive social behaviors, and strengthen neighborhood cohesion. Notable examples from across the nation include: • Pittsburgh, PA Safe Passage • Washington, DC Safe Passage, Safe Blocks • Newark, NJ Safe Passage Program
Youth Guidance's Becoming a Man (BAM) and Working on Womanhood (WOW)	Youth Guidance developed gender-responsive, evidence-based, school-based interventions that utilize cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and trauma-informed practices to help youth develop critical social-emotional skills. These programs have demonstrated significant impact in reducing community violence by addressing the root causes of aggression and trauma. • **Becoming A Man (BAM)** BAM is a group counseling program for young men in grades 7–12 that focuses on impulse control, emotional regulation, and decision-making. Research by the University of Chicago Crime Lab found that BAM reduced violent crime arrests by 45% in its first year and by 50% in subsequent studies. Participants also showed improved school engagement and graduation rates.[10] • **Working on Womanhood (WOW)** WOW is a trauma-informed, CBT-based program for girls in grades 6–12 exposed to high levels of stress and violence. It helps participants build resilience, self-esteem, and coping skills. A randomized controlled trial published in *Science Advances* found that WOW significantly reduced symptoms

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[10] University of Chicago Crime Lab. (n.d.). *Becoming a Man (BAM)*. Retrieved September 6, 2025, from https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/projects/becoming-a-man-bam.

	of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression among participants.[11] Both programs have been implemented in multiple cities, including Chicago, Boston, Dallas, and Kansas City, and have been shown to foster healthier relationships, improve school outcomes, and reduce involvement in the justice system.
Handle with Care	The Handle With Care (HWC) model helps reduce community violence by addressing the immediate emotional and behavioral needs of children exposed to traumatic events, such as witnessing or being a victim of violence. When law enforcement identifies a child at the scene of a traumatic incident, they notify the child's school, allowing staff to provide targeted support before behavioral or academic problems arise. Through early intervention, trauma-informed care, and collaboration between schools, law enforcement, and mental health providers, HWC can reduce the long-term effects of violence, support positive coping skills, and ultimately help interrupt cycles of community violence. Lynn's existing ACE Team provides a strong foundation that could be expanded to integrate the HWC model in partnership with Lynn Public Schools. Strengthening this connection would help ensure that children exposed to violence receive timely, trauma-informed school-based support. To learn more about Handle with Care, visit: https://handlewithcaremd.org/handle-with-care.php.
Stop the Bleed	Stop the Bleed programs equip community members, first responders, and bystanders with the skills and tools to control severe bleeding in emergency situations. In cities like Lynn, which do not have a Level One trauma center, these programs are especially critical; timely intervention by trained community members can save lives while victims are transported to nearby hospitals. By empowering residents with practical, life-saving skills, Stop the Bleed initiatives not only reduce fatalities from violent incidents but also strengthen community resilience and collective responsibility in responding to violence. To learn more, visit: www.stopthebleed.org.
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a set of strategies that reduces opportunities for crime by shaping the physical environment. By improving lighting, maintaining vacant lots, increasing visibility in public spaces, and fostering community ownership of neighborhoods, CPTED can deter violent behavior and encourage positive social interaction. Implemented thoughtfully,

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[11] University of Chicago Education Lab. (n.d.). *Working on Womanhood (WOW)*. Retrieved September 6, 2025, from https://educationlab.uchicago.edu/projects/working-on-womanhood/.

these design strategies help create safer streets, schools, and parks, while promoting a sense of collective responsibility, community cohesion, and long-term reductions in violence.

Notable examples from across the nation include:

- **Lights-ON, Delaware Strong**
  This grant-funded initiative involves volunteers going door to door in neighborhoods of select Delaware cities, offering residents free energy-efficient LED exterior lighting, installed at no cost to help save residents money on electric bills through high-efficiency LED and solar-powered lighting and to increase lighting which can assist in reducing violence.

  To learn more, visit:
  https://helpinitiativede.org/lights-on-delaware-strong.

- **Wilmington, DE Creative Placemaking**
  Wilmington Alliance leads a variety of creative placemaking initiatives that use the arts to foster community engagement, activate public spaces, and build civic pride.

  This strategy has transformed vacant lots into green spaces and underused buildings into community assets, providing neighborhood access to resources, experiences, and infrastructure that strengthen local vitality.

  One example is the Rock Lot, a "vacant to vibrant" project featuring a grass lawn, outdoor seating, and daily public access with free weekly programming. Nearby, a former liquor store and laundromat were both converted into a multi-use community space hosting art programs, exhibits, meetings, and workshops, further enhancing community engagement.

  To learn more, visit:
  www.wilmingtonalliance.org/creativeplacemaking.

Unite Us	Tech platforms like Unite Us can support community violence reduction by creating a coordinated referral network that connects individuals to social, health, and community services. By enabling organizations to refer clients seamlessly and track outcomes in real time, platforms like Unite Us helps ensure that individuals impacted by violence receive the support they need.

This data-driven approach not only improves accountability and follow-up, but also allows community partners to monitor trends, evaluate program effectiveness, and identify gaps in services, strengthening the overall ecosystem for violence prevention.

To learn more about Unite Us, visit: https://uniteus.com.