



LET'S TALK



Photos: Mill No. 5, Damien S. Yelp; 2017 Folk Festival, Lowell Alliance; Operation Nourish, Merrimack Valley Food Bank; Enterprise Bank, Enterprise Bank; Lowell City Hall, Wikipedia; Former UMass Lowell ICC, Inside Lowell

Let's Talk Lowell Community Conversation Summary

June 26, 2025 - 6pm to 8pm | Venue: LTC - 246 Market St Lowell MA

Participants were broken into two to three tables with a volunteer facilitator at each table to help record the conversation, keep it on track, and encourage everyone to share while being respectful of others. After a presentation, tables were assigned topics:

Session 1

- Machine Shop Square/Millyard
- Lowell Communications Hub (Tourism and Marketing)
 - Group chose to instead discuss **Arts Advocacy**
- Let's Walk Lowell (Pedestrian Audit)

Session 2: Two tables both discussed the same questions:

- Is it important to grow our circle again — and if so, what is one thing you could do to bring more folks to the table? How can we help?
- What is one challenge or opportunity in Lowell that you care about deeply we haven't talked about yet — and what special guest(s) should we invite to explore it further?
- What does success look like for Let's Talk Lowell at the end of October? What would need to happen and would you want to come back in January 2026?

After one "session," participants were invited to shift tables to have a new mix of people. These notes start with high-level recommendations, then summaries of each topic. Full transcripts of each table are at the end of the notes.

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Session 1: Community Action Ideas

Machine Shop Square/Market Millyard

- Reach out to vendors and “A Little Bizarre”
- Create visuals and prototypes
- Connect with Lowell National Historical Park
- Check in with City of Lowell Economic Development and Lala Books
- Take photos of the Farmer’s Market and get plans for City improvements
- Invite CTI in August

Arts Advocacy

- Invite MassCreative and Lowell Cultural Council in August
- Invite other artists
- Brainstorm social media and marketing to transform mindsets in arts/advocacy
- Take assessment, inventory, or survey on how the city communicates and promotes arts and culture in the city
- Create a hub for artists of various mediums to collaborate
- Share Let’s Talk Lowell in venues such as CHOP Dinner

Let’s Walk Lowell (Pedestrian Audit)

- Identify next places for future Let’s Walk Lowell pedestrian audits
- Share Andre’s number for sharps collection
- Develop QR code for garages
- Create chalk paths/colored paths for various walking routes
- Develop “Trails of the Week” to share

Session 2: What’s Next for DIY Lowell

Is it important to grow our circle again — and if so, what is one thing you could do to bring more folks to the table? How can we help?

- Create flyers and hang them in places that new audiences may see them
- Provide lists of special guests so people can make individual invitations
- Adjust the program to make it appeal to both types of folks – those who want to talk and learn, and those who want to develop and undertake action plans
- Make special invitations to groups such as Latino/Hispanic community, youth, and other special groups

What is one challenge or opportunity in Lowell that you care about deeply we haven't talked about yet — and what special guest(s) should we invite to explore it further?

- Education
- Trees/green space
- Hamilton Canal
- Greater Lowell – Outside Lowell
- Businesses in other neighborhoods
- Lowell Forward Comprehensive Plan

What does success look like for Let's Talk Lowell at the end of October? What would need to happen and would you want to come back in January 2026?

- Create tables for talk and tables for actions
 - Develop more opportunities outside of Let's Talk Lowell such as an online forum and social events
 - Record more on website, including solutions
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SESSION 1

Machine Shop Square/Market Millyard

- We like
 - Mill No. 5 Legacy
 - Building on City momentum
 - Great name!
 - Activating space!
 - Aiming for next year, maybe this year pilot
- If we're doing...
 - Themed markets
 - Branded theming
 - History signs
 - Downtown business connections
- ...We need to
 - Reach out to vendors and Bizarre person
 - Design more stuff, drafts for August
 - Connect with Park folks
 - Keep up with Ali (Map?)
 - Keep up with Larua

- Take pictures
- Invite in August
 - CTI

Arts Advocacy

- Defining advocacy / defining what taking action is
- Including quieter forms of advocacy
 - I.e. arts-making posters
 - Changing mindsets
 - I.e. "Art isn't real work" -> to provide a platform to showcase the artistic process -> ideation -> sell -> after
- Have MassCreative come in
 - We need a space where different voices (forms of expression) are equally represented
 - Create a one-page defining advocacy/arts advocacy
 - Connecting/inviting MassCreative
 - Inviting other artists -> Various mediums/personalities
 - Brainstorm what kinds of social media posts might help transform mindsets in arts/advocacy
 - An assessment/taking inventory/survey on how the city/arts orgs./artists communicate and promote arts and culture in the City
 - Creation of artist hub (dance, music, painters, etc – various mediums) all together to collaborate
- There is a gap in including others from outside our circle
 - Post events, activities on other platforms or groups
 - Post on other calendars
 - Take accountability/responsibility to share things you're interested in or involved with to others (socials, in person, networking)
 - Posting/handing out flyers or information
 - Volunteering your time
 - Advocate for your community
 - I.e. our city leadership to advocate/share more about what is going on in city -> be part of grassroots
- Lowell Cultural Council should be invited to LTL
 - Provide suggestions/thoughts on promotions
- Share LTL with other events/activities like CHOP Dinner

Let's Walk Lowell (Pedestrian Audit)

- Friday Morning Downtown Clean Ups 7:30 am
- New Starting Points
 - Super Markets
 - Tick or Treating
 - Schools (Where are our crossing guards)
 - Any bus stops during winter
 - Central, Dutton, Bridge, Aiken
 - Parking Garages
 - Out from Downtown
- Share Andre's number for sharps collection
- Extra
 - Parking garages QR code
 - Colored paths
 - Blue to water
 - Red to business
 - Green to food
 - GIS for more than food
 - X signs heaving and banners
 - Trails of the week
 - Info banners talking about walking
 - Random walk ideas
- Talking about needing safer roads for electric bikes to not be on sidewalks

SESSION 2

Table 1

- Missing Topics
 - Education +1
 - Trees/Green space
 - Hamilton Canal
 - Beyond Downtown Biz
 - Giant companies – why Lowell?
 - Neighboring communities – what can we learn/steal?
- Grow circle
 - LRTA
 - LCC

- Youth
- Latino Community
 - Cecilio, Vlad
 - Fortaleza
- Outdoor LTL
- Let's Talk Social
- Inclusive for lots of different folks
- 2026
 - We like
 - Supportive environment
 - Taking on issues
 - All are equal, everyone is heard and listens
 - We want
 - More people, more kinds of people
 - Forum to continue discussion between meetings
 - Move a little faster
 - Solutions

Table 2

- What to do to spread the Network
- Flyers



- Community boards
- Where people who are just moving here check out first
 - Gyms
 - YMCA
 - Choice
 - Where to walk pets
 - Greenways
 - Downtown Paths
 - Social pub/bars
 - Bars downtown
 - Super Markets
 - Market Basket
 - Laundromats
- Cooler stores downtown that have an outdoorsy vibe
- Students at UML or MCC
 - Fox Hall
 - Student focus events
- Other Groups
 - MCG
 - LTC
 - Static flyer for ad break on their televised broadcasts
- Special guest
 - More often and
 - Ask them to share
- We can all talk to special guests we personally know to get them interested
- A new challenge?
 - Looking for gaps in Lowell Forward and where we can fit
 - Pick events that we all go to together
 - A place to meet people and find different experts
 - Advocacy, our big problems can have actions still
 - Wider issues to towns next door
 - Let's Talk Greater Lowell
 - Maybe a laptop per table to look up
- What should the focus be in the new year?
 - Action Table/Talk Table
 - A table that works on idea from last events
 - ID problem, small action or thing

- Site map with resources
- Make a presentation
 - What they do
 - What going where