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Revitalizing Lewiston and Auburn's Riverfront Corridor

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Revitalizing Lewiston and Auburn’s Riverfront Corridor

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Environmental Studies Capstone 417
Bates College
Executive Summary:

The purpose of this community-engaged project is to create maps and redevelopment ideas for target areas along the Androscoggin River of the cities of Lewiston and Auburn, Maine. The scope of this project spanned the riverfront downtown areas of both cities from the Lewiston Railroad Bridge to the Cedar Street Bridge. This study evaluated the current use of riverfront land using three criteria: degree of use, degree of visibility and degree of accessibility. The hope was to find areas with high visibility and help increase their degree of use and accessibility to the Androscoggin River. Prior to the identification of focal points, it was useful to consult scholarly literature on urban redevelopment, existing river revitalization projects in other cities, as well as existing plans for development in Lewiston and Auburn. Using ArcGIS the project focused on a total of six points of interest in Lewiston and Auburn. Additional maps were created for three of the focus points that included outlines of the planned structures and showed lines of vision in perspective of the river. In addition to the maps, the project’s final product included hand-drawn visual representations for two sites, one in Lewiston and one in Auburn.

This project’s ultimate goal was to provide Grow L+A with redevelopment plans for specific areas along our section of the L-A riverfront corridor that they can bring to their board of directors. The redevelopment plans that came out of this project serve to benefit the community by evaluating and increasing land use along the river. This project’s results should be treated as supplements to existing development efforts in the cities along the river. The redevelopment plans have the intention of strengthening both community and the Androscoggin relationship to it.
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Introduction

For our Environmental Studies Capstone project this semester, we partnered with a community organization, Grow L+A, to re-envision segments of downtown Lewiston-Auburn’s riverfront corridor. Grow L+A is a nonprofit organization that promotes and strategizes development in Lewiston and Auburn, Maine. Their mission includes “promoting responsible development: development that is economically sound, sustainable, social responsibility, and supports a healthy community” (growla.org).

Executing this mission in our work with Grow L+A, we have been developing plans for new kinds of land uses that will renew the vitality of riverfront areas, strengthening the Lewiston-Auburn community and the Androscoggin River’s relationship to it.

The Androscoggin River’s history helps explain its position in Lewiston and Auburn today. Crucial to the operation of Lewiston and Auburn’s industrial mills, which were built in the area in part because of the River, it allowed the cities to be powerful competitors in the late 19th into the 20th century’s industrialized economy (Judd 53). While the promise of jobs and a prospering economy facilitated by the Androscoggin brought people to the cities, it did not foster a lasting appreciation for Androscoggin by residents of the area. Decades of treating the Androscoggin as place to dump industrial waste took its toll on the health of the river. The pollution was so extreme that Lewiston business people in the 1940’s expressed concerns that the river’s smell was lowering community morale and driving away residents as well as new businesses (Judd 54). The industries that brought people to the river also drove people away, if not out of the cities then at least physically away from the waterfront.
Though the water quality in the Androscoggin has greatly improved, the disconnect between the river and life in Lewiston-Auburn still exists. Some of the most frequented and popular businesses either face away from the river, like those on Main St. in Auburn, or are located multiple blocks away from the river, such as those on Lisbon St. in Lewiston. Riparian land and structures in both Lewiston and Auburn could have a larger contribution to the area’s economic and social vitality. Development of post-industrial waterfront areas into community assets has become a common way to incorporate rivers into surrounding communities (Gordon, Hagerman, Hurley). We worked to follow this trend, strengthening the L-A community through integration of the Androscoggin, making it both an ecological asset and a community asset in the area.

We attempted to balance the issue of preserving and recognizing local history while also making riverfront spaces attractive to a wide audience, turning the riverfront into more than just a reminder of the past but a place to shape the future. Scholars, Colocousis and Hurley, both emphasize the importance of finding this balance. Redevelopment can have the effect of preserving only a certain narrative of the city, as well as it can erase previously significant elements in order to create new culturally important area (Hagerman 286). We have tried to address this reality of urban development by coming up with and pursuing redevelopment ideas we felt best matched our understanding of community needs. Some of the needs development plans in Lewiston and Auburn have identified include increased green space and open space, community centers along the river and reuse of existing buildings connected to L-A’s heritage (Riverfront Island Master Plan, City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan 2010). Redevelopment plans that came out of
our work with Grow L+A this semester will hopefully establish the Androscoggin as a cultural center of the cities.

**Methodological Approach**

To carry out our project we worked with designated corridors of the cities of Lewiston and Auburn, ME, United States. Prior to our field adventure, we met with Grow L+A about the overall goals and expectations for the project. Tentative due dates and deliverables were produced to give our group a base point. We looked to current development plans such as the Riverfront Master Plan, Planapalooza, and the Auburn Comprehensive Plan to help get become more familiar with the current develop plans that are already out there. To help us better us assess the two cities our group created three criteria used to identify points of interest. The three criteria used- degree of visibility, degree of use, and degree of access- were rated out of five. A score of five was an excellent rating for a site and a score of zero was a poor rating (See the appendices section for full score sheet). The three criteria and points of interests were used to help us choose the best potential develop ideas.

Once we created the criteria we obtained GPS units and walked approximately one city block in length away from the Androscoggin River. Sites that had potential for redevelopment ideas were scored using the three criteria and were marked with the GPS unit. This process was completed for both Lewiston and Auburn. Once all areas were marked, the GPS pointed were downloaded onto a computer, and with the help of Camille Parrish we created our first map on ArcGIS. Our first consisted of layers that showed the current neighborhood of Lewiston and Auburn, as well as shape files that outlined
residential, business, community space and residential/businesses in the areas around our points of interest.

As we progressed throughout our project some points were removed to balance out development ideas for both the cities. Once we finalized our points of interest, they were divided amongst our group and each of us developed ideas for designated points. For each point, a detailed description of its development idea was made with the use of scholarly research to offer support towards our ideas. We came together to give feedback on each other’s ideas, and finalized development plans for each site.

Once final ideas we made we picked two points to go in depth on and provide mapping and visual sketching for. Using ArcGIS, we created smaller focused maps for the two areas of prime focus in our project. Lines of vision and development footprints were made for those two points. In addition we took photos of the current development that show the visual perspective of the lines of vision created in the ArcGIS map. To fully show our development ideas for the two areas in terms of the lines of vision we created hand drawn sketches of the two places to visually represent our plans.

Results and Discussion

Point 001: Lewiston Railroad Bridge

We chose the Lewiston Railroad Bridge as one of our focal points for redevelopment in this project. Redevelopment of this bridge has the potential to increase community access to and appreciation of the Androscoggin River, while also strengthening the connection between Lewiston and Auburn. The Lewiston Railroad Bridge is an operating railroad line that runs from Auburn to Lewiston, crossing over the Androscoggin. Currently there is no official pedestrian walkway on the bridge, it is exclusively intended for trains. It
is possible, however, for people to walk across the bridge on the right side of the railroad track, the side closest to the falls. Despite the fact that this passage is unsafe, community members seem to utilize this crossing between Lewiston and Auburn. Our rating for usage was low (U=0), because currently pedestrian crossing is unsafe. We believe, however, that the community uses this bridge at least occasionally because both times we visited the bridge to learn more about the area we saw people walking along the bridge. It seems as though if the bridge is used, even occasionally, in its current dangerous state it would be frequently used with safe pedestrian crossing. Accessibility, also rated a zero, was low because the pathway to the bridge is hard to find and not well maintained. We rated visibility a five because there is an excellent view of the falls and the river from the bridge, a view that more people should be able to see. Safe pedestrian crossing could be made by extending the bridge to add a walking path on the side of the bridge closest to the bridge. Deeper understanding of engineering and further research is needed to determine the most appropriate way to combine railroad and pedestrian crossings. Opening the Lewiston Railroad Bridge to pedestrians would be a redevelopment strategy that brings together both communities and the Androscoggin.

**Points 002: Veteran’s Memorial Park**

Our next site is currently a parking lot near Veteran’s Memorial Park that seems under-utilized. Based on our three criteria (Visibility =5, Use = 1, Access=0), this area was deemed a great focus area. This point has high visibility of the river but is difficult to get to due to the abrupt cliff edge and the falls below. Our plans for this area would be to create a river walkway/biking path beginning from memorial Park that leads up towards the railroad bridge. However it should be noted that the current structure and set up of the
area does not give the impression that a path can be made up to the railroad. Nevertheless, the implementation of a waterfront walkway would have value to the memorial. Along the potential path there could also be a bike rental shop, and small restaurants that overlook the river. The excess parking space could also be home to a bandshell concert venue, where local performers and theaters companies can hold a variety of shows. Since the stage will be in a communal area we won’t run into the issue of noise complaints from residents. The parking lot now is hardly used and does not welcome the community. Although the Veteran’s Memorial Park is beautiful the unpaved and rough parking lot makes it seem less appealing than it actually is. Thus this redevelopment strategy will enhance both the unused lot and the current existing development.

This redevelopment has a number of potential benefits. The economic benefits would be large due to the businesses that can be placed along the walkway. With more businesses come more people. Incorporating a walkway would have many social benefits for the community. The walkway will overlook the river and thus give local residents an opportunity to appreciate the river, as it is part of the Lewiston and Auburn identity. The biking paths and walkway could bring in tourists, as well as potential becoming the new route for the Dempsey Challenge, which brings in thousands of people every year, thus having both social and economic benefits.

This project would be beneficial to the community because there is definitely a disconnect between local residents and the river. So much of the Lewiston’s and Auburn’s history is centered on the river, and we want the community to get back some of that history. Currently there is so much unused open space surrounding a beautiful memorial park that is underused/under visited. Our hope is that the community will gain more of an
appreciation for the memorial and the river with this redevelopment idea. Analogous to the Riverfront Master Plan and the Auburn Comprehensive Plan, our re-envisioning ideas build off currently existing structures, without losing too much of the community along the way. Waterfront revitalization programs have been extremely popular over the year and generated a lot of success in urban areas. The New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program redeveloped Pier 57 along the Hudson River into 2.5 acres of waterfront space for commercial uses (restaurants, local shops, etc.). The goal of the riverfront is to increase public usable of the river, access to the river, and to provide additional communal spaces that would increase the connection to the river (NYC Waterfront Revitalization Program, Appendix D).

**Point 003: Block A - Lincoln, Chestnut, Oxford, and Beech street**

This location is ideal due to its proximity to downtown Lisbon Street. Lisbon is already an established avenue for businesses only a couple blocks away. To the north east of block A are established mill buildings which house fine restaurants such as Fish Bones and provide ample parking areas. To the south east of the area we will be referring to as "Block A," and across the canals is the Simard-Payne Memorial Park and the proposed space for Museum LA. From Block A one can access the Auburn River Walk. There is easy access to a great view of the river from both the shore and the bridge. The block is also across from the historic Railroad Stop that is being turned into a restaurant soon as well as a short walk away from Lewiston House of Pizza. While the majority of the surrounding buildings are residential, there are also several empty lots nearby with potential for development.

The lot comprises mostly parking lots, one empty lot, and one structure. This structure is currently Gladu roofing company. The structure takes up less than a quarter of
the entire block, which leaves a large amount of room for new structures. Lincoln Alley way cuts through the block providing a potential walk way through the area without having to resort to sidewalks which are small and close to the street.

While adjacent blocks are mostly residential or industrial we think this would be an extremely successful starting point in creating a change of scenery along the Lewiston waterfront. Because Block A falls in between Cedar Street and Main Street, it would inspire other businesses or project planners to consider developing from this central location. It’s proximity to the river and the park already provides incentive for people to explore the area. In addition, the location has a high concentration of historic buildings and a beautiful view of the mills.

Due to the lack of structures on Block A, it would be easier to develop here rather than having to tear buildings down elsewhere. We propose a cultural market be placed here. Lewiston has the benefits of having a culturally diverse population, while still maintaining the New England historic Mill Town feel. Since this is extremely unique, we think it would be beneficial in drawing in both community members and visitors if these qualities were highlighted. This space is especially fitting since it is surrounded by other cultural sites like possibly the future Museum LA, the mills, and the railroad tracks and station. The market could be built in two buildings on either side of Lincoln Alley in order to maintain that pathway. Ideally the pathway would be lined with various shop fronts which were available to local artisans and community members as business opportunities. Some examples we have come up with are; a Somali craft shop, a local jewelry shop, native plants of Maine shop, and a Somali or Franco-American style restaurant. There could be benches along the pathway along with different plaques that have historic facts pertinent
to the area on them. We imagined if we had one of the buildings shaped like a U there could be a grassy area in the block as well. This would be beneficial in the warmer seasons for gatherings and perhaps craft fairs, especially since it is so close to the memorial park. Lastly, Block A is far enough away from the river that environmental concerns and regulations when constructing a new building would not be as complicated to maneuver.

One negative part about the space is that it faces the canals, which at this point are guarded by high chain link fences that give an unwelcoming air. While safety precautions are necessary, perhaps a more elegant alternative would benefit the feel of the area.

We believe this cultural center is ideal for the location. The majority of the Somali population does not seem to be engaged with the river and this would influence community members to explore the area surrounding the river. Additionally, since 2003 National legislation has put an emphasis on “Smart Growth” development in their policy agenda (Bunce, 5). This provides for urban development in a way that considers the societal and cultural implications of change. The concept of Smart Growth promotes a “back to the cities” take on gentrification. Making people want to live in the center of cities prevents urban sprawl, enhances community involvement, and provides less need for automobiles (Bunce, 5). While we agree this type of thinking has merit, all community members must be included when envisioning changes. The cultural center would bring community members together that may not have interacted otherwise. National funding supporting Smart Growth is extremely low, which leaves the pressure on the municipalities to follow this agenda. Unfortunately, the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn have low budgets. We believe this is partially due to the lack of a sense of community there is within each city and between the two. Adding a cultural center would bring people together and provide a situation in
which a sense of community can be formed and citizens can come together to make the
changes they wish to see.

*Point 004: Roy Continental Mill*

One of the area’s large mills, the Roy Continental Mill has a strong connection to
Lewiston and Auburn’s industrial past as a driver of economic and community growth. No
longer operating as a mill and underutilized by Lewiston’s businesses and residents, the
mill complex’s current connection to the city and the river remains undefined. We chose
the Continental Mill as one of our focal points for this project because we believe this
beautiful mill should be more integrated into the present and future of the area. The
Riverfront Island Master Plan, a development plan adopted by the city of Lewiston in 2012,
lists as one of the goals identified by the Lewiston-Auburn community that “The riverfront
area should be the catalyst for enhancing downtown as a whole” (Riverfront Island Master
Plan 6). Change starts on the riverfront, and development of the Continental Mill into a
waterfront destination could have a big impact on the area. Our ideas for development in
this mill will hopefully not only connect the mill to L-A’s community and economy, but also
reconnect the community and economy to the Androscoggin River.

The Continental Mill has the potential to become a valuable community resource
though currently it’s assets are not fully utilized or recognized. Located in Lewiston’s
downtown, the mill is close to parks, residential buildings, established and popular
businesses as well as sites for emerging businesses and attractions. It is easily accessible
from points in Lewiston as well as in Auburn, being right next to a bridge connecting the
two cities. The building itself contains large open spaces and has multiple levels so it could
accommodate many different types of uses. We rated the degree of use for this building a
one on a scale of five because the majority of the space available for lease in the mill is unoccupied. While there are businesses using space in the mill, the boarded up windows and the large but mostly empty parking lots make the complex seem uninviting and unused. Furthermore, the mill’s proximity to the river could easily go unnoticed. Our visibility rating was a two because the river cannot be seen unless you stand at the edge of the property and look through the thick vegetation growing on the riverbank. Because of the vegetation and the steepness of the riverbank, there is not currently a safe way to access the river so we gave the site a zero for accessibility. The Continental Mill is close by proximity to both the river and the community but is not meaningfully connected to either to the extent that it could be. Our redevelopment plans for the river will hopefully emphasize and make use of existing architectural and natural resources.

Our redevelopment plans are based on the large-scale nature of the space, the mill’s close proximity to the Androscoggin River and it’s location in the city. The size of the Continental Mill makes it an ideal place to combine a mix of different types of occupants. It would be difficult to find just one or two businesses that could make a use of such a large amount of space. Bringing different businesses or types of uses with different demographics together in one building could give the Mill a wide community appeal and influence. Making the mill a mixed-use type of building facilitates our intention of connecting Lewiston’s community and economy with the river. Our redevelopment plans also took into account the Continental Mill’s location in the city. As can be seen in Figure 1, the Mill is located across the street from a church, near Simard-Payne Memorial Park and in an area with both residential buildings and businesses.
Based on our assessment of the site we have come up with two options for redevelopment in the Continental Mill. We feel strongly that both of the redevelopment options could serve the purpose of making the Continental Mill an asset in Lewiston in terms of economic and community strength and foraging a better connection with the Androscoggin. If these plans are to be pursued, one redevelopment plan could be chosen over the other based on the city’s needs, community’s interests and available space in the Mill at the time and the plans can also be combined or mixed. One option for redevelopment involves using the Continental Mill as a recreation center and water sports equipment rental space. The Mill’s indoor space could be filled with indoor tennis courts, turf fields that can be used for many different sports (soccer, field hockey, ultimate frisbee), locker rooms and offices related to the recreation center. This use would also fit well with the crossfit gym currently located in a part of the Mill. There are not currently indoor tennis courts or indoor fields available to the public in Lewiston, and such services could be valuable when it becomes too cold or snowy to participate in these sports outside in the winter. Also included in this redevelopment plan would be rental facility or storage space for water sports equipment like paddleboards, canoes, kayaks, paddles and lifejackets. It would make sense to host a rental facility of this sort in the Continental Mill because canoes and kayaks and other such water sports equipment is large and needs a large amount of space, something the Mill can accommodate. The Mill is also right next to the river, so a part of the bank could be landscaped in a way that allows for easy access to the river and a place to launch boats. Our second redevelopment plan, depending on the available space in the Continental Mill at the time of redevelopment, could be combined with the first plan or the two could be kept separate. This plan involves making the area behind the Mill that borders
the river into a native Maine plant garden, thinning the vegetation growing along the riverbank to make the river more visible and adding benches and a method of accessing the river. The ground floors of the Mill would work well as the site for a grocery store, while the upper floors could be turned into loft apartments. Loft apartments could work especially well on the backside of the complex because those apartments would have good views of the river. Both of these plans would connect Continental Mill to the city by involving it in the local economy, the lives of the community and the Androscoggin River.

We believe our redevelopment plans for the Continental Mill will benefit the Lewiston-Auburn area because they address the needs identified and expand on the ideas presented in the Riverfront Island Master Plan. In its description of the market potential through 2021, the Riverfront Island plan lists the need for a “food-anchored shopping center” and increased residential spaces in downtown Lewiston (Riverfront Island Master Plan 14). The plan specifically names the Continental Mill as a good space for loft housing and potentially a site for kayak rentals, plans we have noted and incorporated into our ideas for the Mill (37, 31). There is a large emphasis on creating community spaces and filling existing building with a mix of new uses throughout the Riverfront Island Master Plan, and our idea for an indoor sports complex fits with this emphasis. It is important to us that these consistencies between existing plans made with the collaboration and support of the L-A community and our redevelopment plans exist. We wanted to make sure our plans include what would be wanted and appreciated by the community, our intention being to further and expand on existing plans. The plan states the need for developments that “transform the River from an untapped asset into the centerpiece of the downtown experience” (Riverfront Island Master Plan 19). Our redevelopment plans for the
Continental Mill could serve as a step towards accomplishing this goal, making the Mill a destination that gets people to spend time near the Androscoggin.

*Point 005: Moulton Park*

The park along the Little Androscoggin is a good site for development because it is currently an inaccessible location, but it has potential to be a beautiful river walkway and community space. It also currently has a reputation as an unsafe area, but it has potential to be much safer and more usable. The idea to develop this area as a park and walking/biking trail is a smart and effective use of this space because the area is currently an undesirable area in Auburn, and by making these changes it would become not only safer but more enjoyable. It may also raise property values for the houses nearby and benefit the theater that is located up the hill by providing an attractive and safe place for families and children to be outside.

This development idea also highlights the history of the area as a railroad by leaving the tracks intact. Similar to the High Line in New York City, this combination of bike trail and walking trail would likely draw many residents and promote river enjoyment as well as health.

Making the trail would also facilitate connection between the Little Androscoggin and the greater Androscoggin because of the connection to nearby Barker Mill Trail. Goals of the Riverfront Island Master Plan for Lewiston include increasing connection of places through trails and to increase usage of the river. The Master Plan states its aim to develop in a way that “Celebrates Lewiston’s many assets, including the Androscoggin River, the canal network, and the historic architecture” (Riverfront Island Master Plan). By leaving the tracks in place and by spotlighting the view of the river, our design plan meets this goal.
The Master Plan also notes an objective to “Make the district more walkable to ensure that Riverfront Island functions as a cohesive urban destination where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” By connecting this small corner of the riverfront area to the larger Barker Mill Trail, our development plan fulfills this objective. Our group values the community’s vision and feels it is important for each development project we undertake to be aligned with preexisting plans created by Lewiston and Auburn residents for their own cities.

Our group decided upon this riverside location using our three criteria: degree of use, degree of visibility, and degree of accessibility. We rated the usage of this park area as 2 out of 5 because of information gathered from our community partners, who are Lewiston residents, as well as our experience at the park. Our partners inform us that the park has a reputation as an unsafe area at night. We also observed no visitors to the park during our tour of it. In addition, the lack of signage or any other indication of the park’s entrance, combined with the steep and inconvenient road one must take to drive to it suggest that its usage is low. Another aspect of the park that is under-utilized is the small skate park area. If this area were turned into a playground, families would have much more reason to bring their children to play and walk here, and hopefully would be less intimidated by the park. We see this low usage as motivation to develop the park into more usable space, particularly given its convenient location next to the community theater and near other walking paths and river access points.

The river is somewhat visible from the park, but visibility could be improved. We rated it 2 out of 5. If one stands in the current skate park area, a raised bank and thick tree cover means the Little Androscoggin is mostly if not fully hidden from view. However, there
is potential for this area to have excellent visibility of the river. If one walks up on the raised bank where the railroad tracks are, there is a clear and lovely view of the river through the trees. This is great motivation to build a trail along the railroad tracks, and to clear the trees in some places to allow for greater visibility.

The park is barely accessible at present because it is hidden at the bottom of a steep hill, has little signage and cannot be legally accessed by car. We rated the accessibility of the park as 1 out of 5. Again, this could be improved with our development plan. Creating a walkway from the theater down the hill to the park would capitalize on the community members already using the theater space, as well as hopefully drawing more people to use the theater because of the added benefit of having access to the park. In addition, changing the street layout so that the park is more easily accessible would be extremely helpful. Signs and bright lights at the entrance would also be beneficial.

Many examples exist of riverfront areas that have been successfully developed into parks that become community centers. One such example occurred in the Bronx, New York. Mill Pond Park was named New York’s Park of the Month by the New York Department of Parks and Recreation in February 2010. The Parks and Recreation Department boasts, “Hugging the banks of the Harlem River, Mill Pond Park has transformed a formerly run-down industrial section of the south Bronx into a state-of-the-art recreational facility” (“Mill Pond Park”). The recreational activities available at the park include a children’s play area and athletic facilities including tennis courts, which provide benefits similar to our proposed playground and biking/running trail. Though redevelopment of this park was not inexpensive, it is worth the investment because of the benefits it brings the entire community. “Construction of the park included rehabilitation of the sea wall and four piers,
bringing new vitality to what was only recently a decaying, unused industrial waterfront” (“Mill Pond Park”).

In summary, our development plan for the park beside the Little Androscoggin would be beneficial for many reasons. Economically, improving public areas like parks will help to make Lewiston/Auburn a more desirable area to live and a more profitable location for businesses to develop. Additionally, making the park more attractive and inviting would likely benefit the nearby theater. Socially, developing the park would create a community space that is family-friendly and encourages physical activity of walking and biking along the trail. It would also turn a space that is considered unsafe and undesirable into a space people enjoy using. Also, the park would extend the Barker Mill Trail, connecting the park to the downtown and furthering a sense of Auburn as a walkable, livable city.

*Points 006/006A: Auburn River Walkway*

Analogous to the development plans for the Lewiston side, the river walk path in Auburn, ends behind the Auburn Housing Authority, and an unpaved path that is not easy to find leads up to a look out point over the falls (point 006A). Both sites have great visibility of the river, but is not used to it fullest due its hidden path (V=5, U=2, A=1). Currently, the path has unattractive fences and signs that do not attract new visitors. Development plans for these sites should include better signage and a clear indication that civilians should continue walking on the path to eventually reach the railroad bridge. In addition to fixing the path, our plans would look to creating better fencing that fits in aesthetically with the landscape while also protecting civilians from the falls. This development plan would, like the other plans, increase community engagement with the river, and also offer a continuous walk path from Auburn, across the railroad bridge and to
Lewiston. All in all, connecting both cities and adding on continuous paths will allow people to explore both sections of the river.
Outcomes and Implication

We hope this project will spark community cohesion around a new appreciation of the Androscoggin River. Implications of this project could include increased community use of currently underused and undervalued riparian areas. The outcomes of our redevelopment plans could also further the effort to transform the Androscoggin River from a deterrent to a focal point in the community. Our redevelopment plans could also help strengthen the connection between the cities of Lewiston and Auburn, and bring increased tourism and economy to the area.

Next Steps

Further actions that could be taken include proposing our ideas to other urban development organizations within the community, including the town councils of Lewiston and Auburn. It is evident with so many plans previously developed that more communication between groups would be helpful in order to put these plans into action. After meeting with other groups, changes may have to be made to original plans. A more in depth plan for a walkway on the Lewiston Railroad Bridge needs to be developed with the help of an architect and engineer. Once a plan for the walkway is developed an additional plan should be formed on how to make the bridge connection to from Auburn to Lewiston more inviting. As for the proposed community center, interviews can be conducted in order to get a sense for what types local and cultural artisans would want to sell their goods at the market. Across the board, further steps should be taken with as much involvement of the community as possible!
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Appendices:

Appendix A. Literature Review

While development along waterfronts is by no means a new concept, approaches to development have become an increasingly contested issue. Waterfront towns that historically supported industry have been struggling to maintain their once economically flourishing community due to the loss of industrial businesses along the river. Towns must struggle to attract businesses and people back into the urban center. Communities often decide to utilize the river as a focal point and driver when strategizing revitalization plans. This brings about the additional challenge of what to make of all the old industrial buildings that line the river. In these types of industrial towns, predominantly the pattern was for residential and business to form away from the industrialized river creating more urban sprawl. Trends in revitalization show that focusing energies on the waterfront are often a catalyst for the development of inner city areas (Jones 1).

While desires for implementing changes commonly arise initially at the local level, private sector groups become the primary institutions in implementing initial changes to a community. Primarily focused on short-term profits, they fail to take a sustainable approach both socially and economically (Jones 5). This results in lack of long-term benefits and economically and little or no benefits for the community members. This shortsighted approach can worsen the town’s economic conditions even further and create resentment among community members.

In attempt to decrease shortsighted harmful development, the United States implemented a smart growth policy for urban growth management (Bunce 655). The policy focused on long term affects of development in economics, the environment, and the
community (Bunce 655). Unfortunately, due to lack of funding, these policies have become municipalities’ responsibility. As converging institutions—public, private, and community—work to make development plans under these new policies, problems concerning funding and difference in opinion continually surface. Funding is a continual struggle that needs to be addressed in innovative and creative ways that combine the forces of public and private institutions.

A large body of recent literature claims that rivers can provide unique opportunities for community redevelopment when they incorporate existing structures while also updating and revitalizing a community’s identity. In his article, “Shaping neighborhoods and nature: Urban political ecologies of urban waterfront transformations in Portland, Oregon,” Chris Hagerman describes Portland’s “oft repeated and rare success story of planning for redevelopment in American cities” (Hagerman 286). He notes that it was important to tailor development plans to fit the city’s prominent image as environmental and sustainable and “liveable.” He suggests, however, that these well-known aspects of Portland’s identity may also serve to disguise any elements of development that do not, in reality, live up to city’s progressive image.

One of Portland’s successful strategies was to encourage increasing urban densities as opposed to allowing for suburban sprawl. In addition, Oregon’s state-mandated program limits urban growth in order to maintain agriculture and forest lands. Hagerman states that such programs are dependent upon the “shifting social constructions of nature implied by references to green values such as ‘liveability’” (Hagerman 286). Hagerman continues to explore meanings of liveability throughout the rest of his article, finding it an important aspect of how development occurs. The idea of liveability is more than “just clever
marketing,” it also “reflects a vision for the future of the city that negotiates anxieties about the environmental damage and social fragmentation that occurred as a consequence of industrial modernism” (288). Liveability is appealing, in other words, because it seems to offer a way of inhabiting a formerly alienating, industrial space in a way that is communal, focused on people rather than production, and perhaps even environmentally conscious. However, emphasizing liveability can also be a tactic to erase history of work, struggle, and environmental degradation. Hagerman argues that in practice, creating a liveable city often means silencing certain parts of history and highlighting others, while looking towards a new vision of the future. Because they are used to erase history, rhetoric of “improvement,” “development,” “revitalization,” and “liveability” can also drive out lower-class residents and their stories. Gentrification is the name often given to this process. Hagerman claims that waterfront gentrification is often particularly “egregious” because it “capitalizes on the de-industrialization of the central city and the displacement of working class neighborhoods for new, elite landscapes of consumption...[gentrification] often requires the silencing of particular stories and the removal of contentious places and activities” (287).

Hagerman cites several other authors who have also criticized the exclusive nature of these landscapes of consumption, including Harney 1989, Smith 1996 and Smith 1989. The discourse also emphasizes “liveable cities” as a foil for “urban sprawl,” meaning that a liveable city has a center, coordinates land use and transportation, is socially inclusive, and preserves the environment (289). Thus new development projects seek to honor industrial and urban history, while also attempting to be innovative in creating new forms of community space, green transportation, environmental awareness, etc. Hagerman calls this
joint vision “The hybridized imagination,” claiming it “suggests a purified past and utopian future by valorizing landscapes that evoke an early modern urban system cleansed of the externalities of factories, workers and the socially marginal” (289). Since the process of gentrification makes invisible histories that are “contentious,” it is important to monitor its role in development and revitalization plans, especially its unspoken manifestations such as the types of “nature” that are worth preserving and what type of community is seen as desirable.

As Hagerman discussed, recognizing history is essential to inclusive, community-based development. Andrew Hurley’s article “Narrating the Urban Waterfront: The Role of Public History in Community Revitalization” agrees with the importance of what he calls “public history” in planning improvements to cities. However, he warns that there are always inherent risks in telling the story of a place, even when attempting to include under-represented voices: “the danger of reducing history to uncritical celebration lurks wherever manufacturing local pride constitutes a project goal” (Hurley 20). ‘Manufacturing local pride’ is a common feature of river revitalization projects because they encourage both community members and especially outside tourists to see abandoned buildings not as run-down and depressing, but as fascinating storytellers of a former time. Thus there are two main approaches to public history, one of which is driven by the elite and glorifies the past through such means as statues, and one driven by social historians that attempts to tell common peoples’ stories of oppression and struggle due to race, class, ethnicity and gender (Hurley 20, Loewen). Many history projects have been conducted using this inclusive social history approach, such as Porter et al. 1986 and Frisch 1990.
Because of the previously mentioned distinction between two types of history, there is often a conflict between representing inter-community history and attracting tourists through “heritage tourism” (Hurley). Sometimes in industrial towns, local people advocate for their own stories to be preserved by supporting the creation of museums, and in other cases museums are federally supported, such as in Lowell, Massachusetts (O'Donnell 817). However, O'Donnell points out that locally funded museums are hopeful for industrial cities because they “show that communities need not wait for federal windfalls in order to commemorate the past in an intelligent way” (O'Donnell 827).

Though history can be told by many voices, in the present, decisions regarding land use are often dominated by those who advocate land use for new residents and amenities, not for labor or industry. This manifests in a shift to “new patterns of growth driven not by the land as a source of commodities such as timber, but as a natural amenity that attracts new residents and businesses” (Colocousis 757). Colocousis cites other authors who discuss this shift, including Charnley et al., Johnson, Johnson and Beale, McGranahan, Nelson, and Winkler et al. This new pattern of growth means that creating an image and identity of a city that attracts tourism is highly important. However, in some cases, such as the one cited by Colocousis, towns are not able to create an identity that attracts tourists when they are plagued by a negative identity that keeps them from developing as a tourist destination. Such towns are “poised between a long trend of industrial decline and an uncertain economic future,” and even though they have potential as “high-amenity” locations, their “place character” limits their development (Colocousis 757-8).

In his article “Bankside Urban,” Paul Stanton Kibel discusses the place character of urban rivers and how revitalizing this character can have negative historical associations to
the urban renewal of the 1940s, 50s and 60s in which there was an emphasis on “slum clearance” (Kibel 2). The attempt to improve urban areas meant that “the residents living in the areas subject to urban renewal often ended up the victims rather than the beneficiaries of this clearance” (Kibel 2). Urban renewal of the 1940s-60s was comprised of highway construction, urban renewal and redlining by financial institutions, which urban historian Jon C. Teaford calls a “trinity of evil” (Teaford qtd. in Kibel 3). As Kibel points out, understanding the negative associations with urban renewal from history helps contextualize current perceptions of urban river revitalization projects. He argues that although historical trends may affect current practices by encouraging an emphasis on community involvement and inclusion, this updated rhetoric may mask the same underlying urge to remove poor people (Kibel 3).

It is important to recognize when urban revitalization efforts actually aim to include people and when they would prefer to benefit outsiders and businesspeople more than local residents. Kibel questions the intention of revitalization projects, asking, For whom is this greening being done: For the minority and low-income residents who presently live and work near the riverfront where maritime and industry were formerly located? For the affluent white residents and workers who will move in following the gentrification that riverside parks will make possible?...For the birds, fish and mammals that will benefit from the habitat provided by restored wetlands and new woodlands? Our instinct may be to answer in the affirmative of all of these question, but this instinct ultimately evades the reality that hard choices need to be made and that these choices may help some and hurt others” (Kibel 12). Tempting as it is to believe that development can
benefit everyone, it is essential to recognize that different approaches will yield different outcomes, and that what benefits one group may not benefit another.

One way to counter the trend of gentrification described by Kibel and Hagerman would be through public ownership of urban shorelines. In his article “Renewing Urban Waterfronts,” Donald F. Wood points out that instead of being only negative for a community, “Urban renewal applied to waterfronts gives the public another opportunity to increase its control over urban shoreline” (Wood 148). This control could include all riparian rights such as handling of cargo and vessels, residential areas, private piers, pedestrian usage, etc. Another important reason for public control is the ability to ensure shorelines do not erode and environmental sustainability is maintained. Wood concludes, “In the long run, public ownership of shorelines may be the answer” (Wood 149). In the absence of this ideal scenario, however, public participation and community involvement in decision-making regarding urban revitalization problems is essential.

In addition to community involvement in planning, it is important to implement plans slowly and incrementally so a community can adjust to the changes taking place. In his article “Design and Managing Change in Urban Waterfront Redevelopment,” David L.A. Gordon cites Battery Park City as an example of a successful “incremental approach to implementation which focuses on the quality of public space while preparing urban design guidelines for building sites” (Gordon 287). Gordon also quotes four suggestions from Cooper Eckstut to solving urban design problems: think small, learn from what exists, integrate, and design streets instead of buildings (Eckstut qtd. in Gordon 287). This approach includes the influence of urban history, and also works well within the political system because the changes are manageable.
The literature regarding urban waterfront renewal is varied and complex because renewal is a process that has political, economic, social and environmental considerations. As such, an elite group’s voice often dominates the voices of other groups who also deserve consideration. The literature does suggest many ways that many interest groups can work together to successfully develop and improve waterways, keeping history intact. However, to do so requires a delicate balance between many forces and factors, and therefore deserves much consideration and caution.
Appendix B: Detailed Methods

Information about Focus Areas along Androscoggin River

Key: V= visibility
    U= degree of use
    A= accessibility

*Criteria were rated on 5-point scale. 0= lowest and 5= highest.

Point 001: This point is the Lewiston Railroad Bridge that is currently used as a railroad line that runs from Auburn to Lewiston over the Androscoggin. The bridge gives you a very good view of the river, however use and access to the river were non-existent. Pedestrians are not allowed to walk across the bridge due to lack of walking path. This site has the potential of becoming a combined walk and railroad bridge that connects the cities of Lewiston and Auburn.
V= 5, U= 0, A=0

Point 002: This point is a parking lot near Veterans’ Memorial Park that seems under-utilized. This site has potential as the beginning of a river walk from Memorial Park towards the railroad bridge. Analogous to the bridge, this point has high visibility of the river and could also become a popular site for local residents.
V=5, U=1, A=0

Point 003: This a lot next to a roofing company and near apartment buildings. This lot, currently used as a metal storage yard, has the potential to become an area of value in the community because of its location next to the canals, residential space as well as businesses. Our visibility and access ratings for this point apply to the canal, not the river itself.
V=3, U=4, A=0

Point 004: This point is the Continental Mill, a historic mill building with space available for lease. There are a lot of developments that could potentially take place in this mill, including loft style apartments on the upper floors. Though the mill is right next to the river, the steep riverbank and the thick vegetation growing on it makes visibility of the river low and accessibility non-existent.
V=2, U=1, A=0

Point 005: This point is Moulton Park, a park located down the hill from the Lewiston-Auburn Community Little Theater. Despite being right next to the Little Androscoggin River and connected to the Androscoggin River Walk, this park appears to be forgotten by the community and lacks a lot of the infrastructure that could make it safe and enjoyable to a wider audience (e.g. street lights, parking). While actual accessibility to the river is limited, in the case of this park it is not relevant.
V=4, U=2, A=2
Point 006/006A: This point is the start of the Auburn River walkway, and is also the start of an unmarked path that leads to the railroad bridge. The site is currently underutilized because the path to the railroad bridge is hidden and not well kept. Despite its condition, the site has great views of the falls and the river.

V= 5, U=2, A=1

Appendix C: Supplemental Results

Figure 5. Hand drawn illustration of our development plan for the parking lot near Veteran’s Memorial Park in Lewiston, ME.
Figure 6. Hand drawn illustration of our development plan for Moulton Park in Auburn, ME.

Figure 7. Parking lot near Veteran’s Memorial Park (Point 002). Photo taken 12/11/13.
Figure 8. View of the river from the Auburn Riverwalk (Point 006). Photo taken 12/11/13.

Figure 9. Look out point on path towards the Lewiston Railroad Bridge (Point 006A). Photo taken 12/11/13.
Figure 10. Lewiston Railroad Bridge (Point 001). Photo taken 12/11/13.

Figure 11. View of the Androscoggin from the Lewiston Railroad Bridge (Point 001). Photo taken 12/11/13.
Figure 12. View of the falls and the Androscoggin from the Lewiston Railroad Bridge (Point 001). Photo taken 12/11/13

Figure 13. Panorama of Moulton Park, Auburn, ME. Photo was taken 12/11/13.
Figure 14. Image of bandshell design used in illustrated sketch of the parking lot near Veteran’s Memorial Park.
http://www2.dupont.com/Glass_Laminating_Solutions_LA/es_MX/whats_new/carpenters_schubert.html