



riverfront island master plan

SUMMARY



City of Lewiston, ME
Riverfront Island Master Plan Committee
Goody Clancy
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OVERVIEW



A quiet renaissance is underway along Lewiston’s downtown riverfront. Over the last ten years, both Lewiston and Auburn’s central areas have begun to reorient themselves to face the Androscoggin River. A great river, once harnessed to produce the power that drew industry to the twin cities, can now again be the spark that defines the communities. The riverfront can become the region’s great urban destination, a place for recreation, cultural activities, work and urban living.

RECENT SUCCESSES

Despite severe economic headwinds, much has been accomplished in recent years. Collaborative partnerships involving public, private and non-profit entities—and a shared commitment to supporting reinvestment in the community—have drawn new businesses and destinations to Lewiston-Auburn.

Riverfront Island, a pivotal area within the city’s downtown riverfront, has come to host more than 1,000 jobs within the Bates Mill Complex, where high-quality restoration has attracted major office uses, destination restaurants, a brewery, a medical office, and new loft-style housing now under construction.

At the same time, new cultural destinations and outdoor spaces are also bringing activity to the

Riverfront Island area. A former church now houses the Franco-American Heritage Center, a performance venue that draws thousands to the area each year. Museum L-A, a dynamic non-profit devoted to telling the 200 year story of work and community in Lewiston-Auburn, has begun to design their new home—a modern museum space on the River’s edge that will incorporate portions of a former mill building. Once an abandoned rail yard, Simard-Payne (Railroad) Park is now a major public space along the River, and home to the annual Great Falls hot air Balloon Festival. A former rail bridge is now a pedestrian and bike bridge, linking Simard-Payne Park in Lewiston to Bonney Park in Auburn, and providing striking views of the River. A Lewiston-Auburn Riverwalk has begun to take shape on the Auburn side of the River, and paths have been established along portions of the Lewiston riverfront as well.



Waterfront access at Simard-Payne Park creates a new community destination.



The canal can become a true amenity along Oxford Street, attracting new people and residential development to the edges of the park.

A few blocks from the riverfront, new businesses and restaurants have begun to appear on Lisbon Street, Lewiston’s “Main Street.”

ONGOING CHALLENGES

The success of recent years has created a solid foundation for the area, but not yet a strong, vibrant urban riverfront destination. The downtown riverfront needs a critical mass of more housing, public amenities, and jobs—both to improve quality of life and to support economic development that extends beyond the riverfront and benefits the center cities of both communities.

Today, Riverfront Island’s largely untapped assets—scenic Great Falls, miles of waterfront land, a canal network, and roughly 1 million square feet of still-vacant mill buildings—hold the keys to the area’s continued resurgence. This plan identifies the next steps in Lewiston’s renaissance, and outlines a vision for the future of Riverfront Island as *the* urban

riverfront destination for the community and the region. The plan identifies both the key near- and longer-term steps that will advance this vision.

SHARED VISION

Through extensive analysis and public discussion **a common vision has emerged for Riverfront Island as an urban, recreation-oriented destination** that:

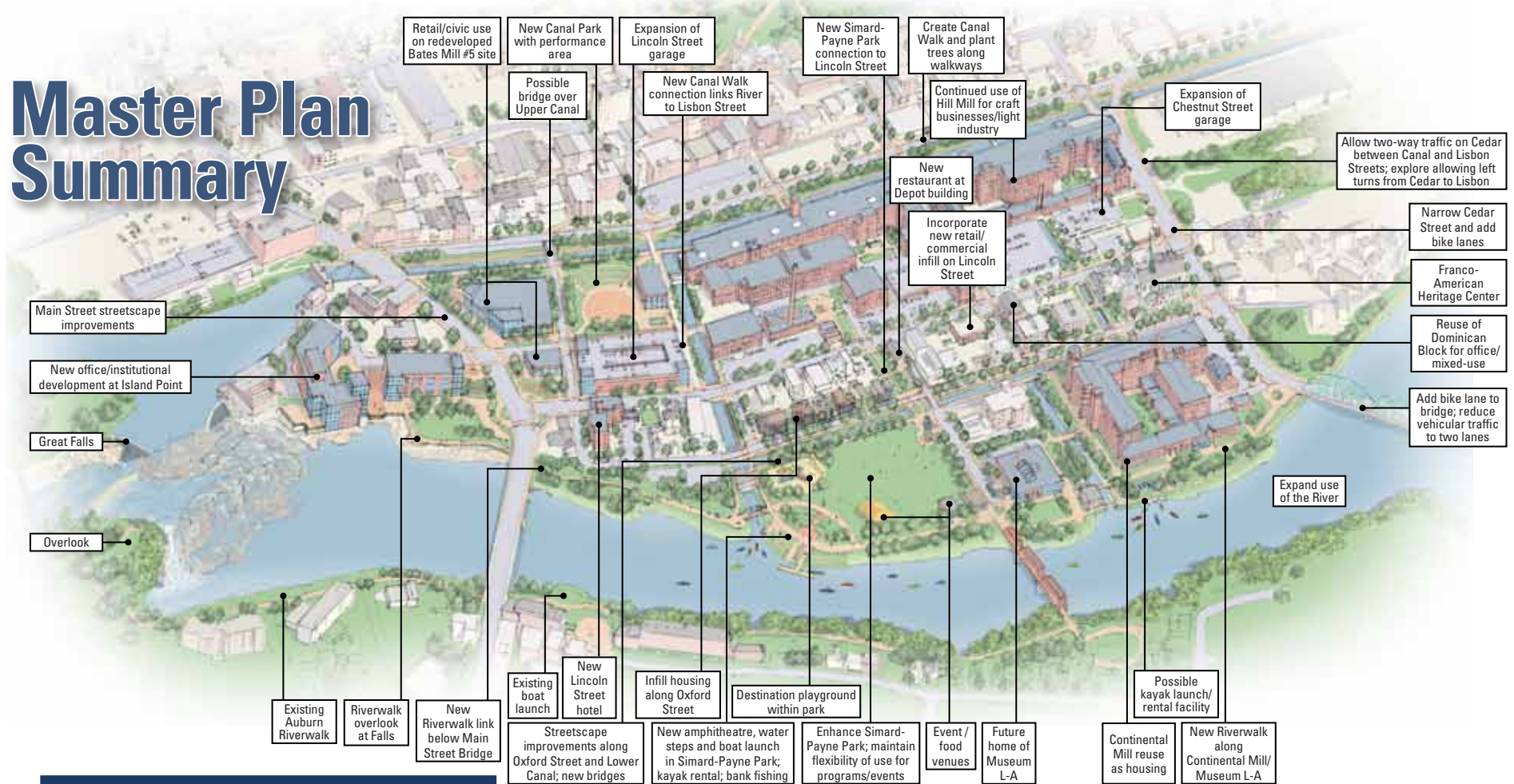
- Features **a mix of activities** and uses, including significant new housing, open space, stores, offices, restaurants, and a hotel—all with strong connections to the River and the Lisbon Street area.
- Serves as a **cultural center and destination** for the Lewiston-Auburn community and for the broader region.
- **Celebrates Lewiston’s many assets**, including the Androscoggin River, the canal network, and the historic architecture.

GOALS

Four closely related goals guide this master plan:

- 1) **Tap the power of the River** through development of a Riverwalk and improved water access to enhance quality of life and to support economic development.
- 2) **Attract a vital mix of uses**, including housing, through continued reuse of historic buildings and thoughtful new development that bring new life and activity to the area.
- 3) **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.
- 4) **Insist on quality** in both public and private investment—to attract desired businesses, residents, and visitors, and so that the riverfront grows as a place the L-A community can take pride in.

Master Plan Summary



elements of the vision

<p>Tap the Power of the River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a continuous Riverwalk. • Make Simard-Payne a true waterfront park—with improved amenities and stronger connections to the water and surrounding streets. • Advance development of Museum L-A as a waterfront anchor. 	<p>Attract a Mix of Uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a critical mass of housing. • Lincoln Street—focus area for new retail and commercial uses; move forward with new hotel. • Oxford Street—new housing mixed with arts/cultural and open space amenities. • Canal Street—reestablish trees and create a gracious green corridor. 	<p>Make the District More Walkable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Canal Walk network. • Improve Oxford Street as a walkable place. • Narrow Cedar Street to three lanes and incorporate bike lanes.
				<p>Insist on Quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use design guidelines to shape new development and rehabilitation.