Lawrence, Massachusetts
Greenway Plan

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1.0 Introduction

The city of Lawrence is located in the Northeast section of Massachusetts on the Merrimack River. "According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the city had a total population of 76,377." It was settled in 1655 and incorporated in 1847. Surrounding communities include Methuen to the north, Andover to the southwest, and North Andover to the southeast. Lawrence lies along Interstate 495, has a total of 7.4 square miles of land and roughly a half square mile of water.

Manufacturing products of the city include electronic equipment, textiles, footwear, paper products, and computers. Aside from the Merrimack River, other water features include the Spicket River, which flows into the Merrimack from Methuen, and the Shawsheen River, which forms the southeastern border of the city. Lawrence has two power canals that were formerly used to provide hydropower to the mills - one on the north bank of the river, the other on the south that was never completed. Channeling water into these canals is the Great Stone Dam, which lies across the entire Merrimack and was, at the time of its construction in the 1840s, the largest dam in the world.

A greenway is a linear corridor connection for people and wildlife. These corridors can be both manmade and natural such as an abandoned railway, a dirt trail or river corridor. Goals of a greenway are to provide protected undeveloped land for safe movement and migration of wildlife. Greenways can improve the natural features of a region such as revitalizing the waterfront to improve water quality and vegetating areas that are baron or eroded.

Our proposed greenway-plan will be analyzing and assessing the important features have Lawrence, Massachusetts and surrounding communities. After our assessment of the city and surrounding towns, we will focus into the heart and center of the Lawrence and using that center as a hub for connecting to important surrounding areas. Our focus areas for the city of Lawrence were chosen because of some importance in greenway connection, open space connection or need for vast improvement to support human recreation.
2.0 Site Assessment
   2.1 Regional Context
Lawrence Regional Context

Lawrence, Massachusetts is located in Essex County and situated 25 miles north of Boston. Lawrence has a small land area of approximately 7 square miles with a population of roughly 76,000. The small land area with a large population leads to areas within the city having large population densities. The current population density averages about 10,900 people per square mile. Lawrence also has rich cultural diversity. Seventy-three percent of the current population is either Hispanic or Latino. The median household income in about 25,000$ and about 21% of families are currently living under the poverty line which is high compared to the US average of 9%.

Lawrence is bordered by Methuen, Andover, and North Andover and is essentially divided in half by the Merrimack River that runs east to west through the city. Lawrence has easy access to major highway that includes interstate 495 and interstate 93. These two major routes combined with route 213 essentially create a loop that runs along the outer edges of Lawrence. Lawrence also has a MBTA train stop that runs North to South from Haverhill into the city of Boston. This provides residents easy access to surrounding towns as well as the city and has become an area in which people priced out of Boston are beginning to migrate to. Progress is being made on improvements and expansions on bike/rail trails that would connect Lawrence to surrounding existing systems that extend as far as Manchester, NH.

www.city-data.com

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Land use

Land use in Lawrence varies with major uses being industrial, high-density residential, multi-family residential, urban public/institutional, and commercial. These land uses make up the majority of the city's characteristic and are tightly intermingled. This is due in part to the planned industrial nature of the city's design, which was intended to promote connectivity through multiple land uses. Most of the industrial land uses currently are situated along the Merrimack River but much of those buildings have since become abandoned and plans are in the works for conversion to multi-family units. Some of the industrial uses are also planned to be turned into waterfront parks and various other parks throughout the city through series of greenways and bike paths.
2.2 History and culture

Lawrence, Massachusetts is a city of immigrants and first planned industrial city. It has been home to over 45 different immigrant groups since 1847. Lawrence is a city rich in culture and diversity. Its richness is still celebrated in its magnificent architecture, unique downtown and the diverse ethnic cultures very much alive in Lawrence today. The city celebrates many culture and historic related events.

History of Lawrence

Lawrence was the most ambitious planned textile-manufacturing city in New England region. In the 1840’s, when Boston merchants saw the tremendous potential of waterpower, they strategically planned and developed a community of mills just 25 miles north of Boston on the banks of the Merrimack River. The city developed by the Boston entrepreneurs who launched the American Industrial Revolution. This became the City of Lawrence.

Essex Company had significant influence for both industrial infrastructure and overall layout of the city of Lawrence including streets, sewers, blocks of house lots and parks over time 1845 to 1979. In 1845, the Essex Company was chartered to build a dam and canals for manufacturing purposes on the Merrimack River. Through the Essex Company Lawrence was planned and major landmarks constructed including the Great Dam, canals and many of the early mills. Lawrence, Lowell, Appleton, Jackson and many others became interlocked families of Essex Company who controlled most of the New England textile industry.
The population of Lawrence doubled from 44,000 to over 90,000 between 1890 and 1915 as the mills attracted immigrants from dozens of countries. However, low wages and poor working conditions took workers’ toll on the mill workers as the population increased. Therefore, intolerable working condition brought a workers’ demand for a decent wage, better working conditions and an improved way of life. Lawrence was called “the City of Workers”, and many important historical events were related with the industry. Two significant historical events were the collapse and fire of Pemberton Mill and Bread and Roses Strike.

In 1860, one of the significant industrial disasters happened that is collapse and fire of Pemberton Mill. It was the worst industrial accident in the U.S. history, and it brought the international attention. This disaster also brought the attention for working condition because 88 workers killed and hundreds of families lose their income.

The Great Strike of 1912 is another significant industrial events of the city of Lawrence. It also called as the Bread and Roses strike. This was succeeded by workers to improve their working conditions. The U.S. congressional hearings afterward which called national attention of the condition of workers especially for children, and it contributed to changes in the Federal laws regarding child labor.

During 1950 to 1970 urban renewal started that was called Common, Valley, and Concord Streets Urban Renewal Project. It was the process of conserving, rehabilitating, or clearing and reconstructing parts of a city to preserve the physical environment of the city. The first area targeted in Lawrence was 35 acres north of the Merrimack River between Lawrence Street and Broadway, Common and Bradford Streets. However, Urban Renewal of this period results in demolition of whole neighborhoods and results in more native families leaving.
Lawrence Greenway Plan

1. Compagnone Common
2. Den Rock Park
3. Manchester Street Park
4. Bellevue Cemetery
5. City Hall
6. History Center
7. Public Library
8. Water Tower
9. Merrimack River
10. Spicket River
11. Great Stone Dam
12. North Canal

lawrence.essexcountyma.net

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Cultural Diversity of Lawrence

Attracted to the city by job opportunities and by other of the same ethnic background, immigrants began arriving in Lawrence even as the first stone was laid to build the city. By 1912, people from over 40 countries around the world began to settle down in the city. Different ethnic groups interacted with each other to create and celebrate the Lawrence’s cultural diversity. Now, Lawrence celebrates its rich culture, historic diversity and multicultural flavor in numerous organizations, education programs, volunteer events and family activities. The City of Lawrence offers unique arts, recreational activities, and many annual events to celebrate the rich culture and historical diversity.

- **The Campagnone Common** was first public park in Lawrence. Early residents enjoyed Sunday strolls and picnicked on Essex Street. Local bands entertained from an ornate bandstand, and on hot summer days children darted in and out of a fountain and artificial pond installed in 1914. Thunderous celebrations occurred in the park when cannons were fired to mark Northern victories during the Civil War.

- **Lawrence History Center** was founded in 1978 to collect and preserve documents and artifacts, including the records of the Essex Company, thousands of historic photographs, over 700 oral histories, and numerous other local records and documents from individuals and businesses.
Lawrence Greenway Plan

- The Lawrence Farmers Market are held Wednesdays from July to October on Appleton Way in the downtown Essex Street business district and Saturdays at the Greater Lawrence Family's Health Center Park Street site.

- Essex Art Center founded in 1993, this non-profit organization offers continuous and affordable after school and evening programs for children and adults, vacation camps and adult workshops taught by local artists in a variety of media.

- Lawrence-based New England Civic Ballet (NECB) enhances the greater Merrimack valley's cultural scene while supporting our young people’s talents and accomplishments.

- The city of Lawrence’s major annual events
  - Semana Hispana - a celebration of Latino heritage
  - Bread and Roses Festival - a celebration of Lawrence's diversity and its labor history
  - Feast of The Three Saints - more than 60,000 people attend this annual weekend-long event, which kicks off with a free concert year
  - Lawrence Celebration Regatta - a variety of race categories over a four-lane, 1000-meter course on the beautiful Merrimack River. Watch national rowing competitors compete while enjoying food, games, exhibits and more
  - Irish Heritage Month, March - historical and cultural preservation, exhibits, food, dance, and music.
Local and State Register Historic Districts of Lawrence

- Arlington - Basswood District
- Arlington Mills Historic District
- High Service Water Tower and Reservoir
- North Canal Historic District
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Industrial Heritage of Lawrence

The Essex Company was established in 1845 by a group of Boston Businessmen in order to develop the land that now comprises the City of Lawrence. Daniel Saunders, Nathan Appleton, Patrick Jackson and Abbott Lawrence joined with engineer Charles Storrow and others to form the Essex Company. Through the Essex Company, Lawrence was planned and constructed major landmarks including the Great Dam, canals, and many of the early mills. The harnessed strength of the Merrimack River and its system of canals fueled the Lawrence mills that produced textiles for the American and European markets. Now, the massive mill buildings lining on the Merrimack River are a tribute to Lawrence's industrial heritage.

- Lawrence Machine Shop (Everett Mill), unlike other mills in Lawrence, is constructed of rubble stone, including its 125’ chimney. Built by the Essex Company in 1846-48, it was used for the manufacture of locomotives and other large machinery. The tall stair towers were formerly used to store water and still retain their elaborate curved wood stairs.

- When Everett Mill built in 1909, this monumental brick mill was the largest cotton mill in the world. Its facade provides an interesting optical illusion. When viewed from a distance the facade of the building seems to be of solid brick, but as one moves closer to it or views it from Essex Street the existence of large windows becomes obvious. This “venetian blind” effect is due to the brick buttresses that support this enormous facade.

- American Woolen Company Offices built in 1900. This building embellished with details that borrowed from Italian Renaissance palaces such as the elaborate entrance portico, the rusticated first floor walls, and the carved keystones over the windows.
Lawrence Greenway Plan

- Bay State Mills Boarding House built in 1847. This structure is typical of boarding house in Lawrence during the mid-nineteenth century.

- Pemberton Company Mill is the first building on the site. This building was constructed by the Essex Land and Water Company beginning in January 1853. Production of cotton goods was begun in this building in 1855 under the firm name of Pemberton Mills Incorporated. On January 10th 1860, the structure collapsed, killing 88 and injuring approximately 300 of the 670 persons inside the building at the time.

- Washington Mills and American Woolen Extension buildings illustrate different architecture style typical of their period of construction. The brick Washington Mill was constructed in 1886. The reinforced concreted and brick American Woolen Company Extension was built between 1909 and 1925 over a portion of an earlier mill.

- Lower Pacific Mill was originally built in 1864 as a two-story structure. Later additions made in 1877 and 1908 result in the present day four-story structure. Massive triple sash windows create vast glass facade.

- Upper Pacific Mills Bridge built to carry workers and supplies to the mills. It is one of only three or four known surviving examples of Thomas Moseley's wrought-iron tubular arch bridge. First built in 1855, Moseley's bridge designs evolved over a period of approximately twenty years.
Lawrence Greenway Plan

The Great Stone Dam was designed by Charles Storrow and constructed in 1846-48 under the supervision of Charles Bigelow. The dam, which measures 1629 feet length, was constructed in order to create a millpond thirty feet in depth. The dam is the longest dam on the Merrimack River and cost $250,000 to construct.

South Canal - the Essex Company began digging this smaller power canal on the other side of the Merrimack River in 1865. It was slightly over a half-mile long and ten feet deep. By 1880 the canal brought waterpower to six small factories including paper mills, tanneries, and bobbin manufacturers.

North Canal – Irish and Yankee laborers dug a power canal that was one-mile long, twelve feet deep, and which narrowed from one hundred to sixty feet wide. The canal ran along one side of the mills bringing water from the millpond behind the dam to the power generating turbines in the Lawrence mills.

Natural and cultural resources of the City of Lawrence are associated with historic events, cultural activities, and aesthetic values of the city. Merrimack River, Spicket River, canals, and the Great Stone Dam, as a cultural and natural resources of the city, have great potential to be developed as a green corridor to promote human movements as well as wildlife habitats. In addition, industrial heritages, cultural diversity, and many historical related event could be developed further to bring more vibrancy to the city.
2.3 Natural Resources

The Merrimack River is one of the most important assets to the Lawrence and is a major ecological footprint. The river provides drinking water for many towns surrounding Lawrence. The water Shed area and flood plain around the Merrimack is the most dense where the Spicket and Shawsheen rivers meet the Merrimack. Areas of green are endangered wetland areas. Most are found at intersections of streams into the Merrimack River. Increased amounts of pollutants were found in these areas from urban infrastructure and high amounts of water runoff.

Areas of the Spicket in the North have been re-routed which has caused flooding and lots of erosion. All three rivers have very wide watersheds and are all lacking wetland areas for water filtration and infiltration and lack animal habitats.

A soil diagram of Lawrence and studying the soils starting from closest to the River consisting of flood plain alluvium, then moving slowly away from the river the soils begin to change into sand and till, then furthest from the river consists of gravel and fine grained deposits. Soil conditions can be a barrier in constructing buildings, getting water to infiltrate, and constructing roads.

Forested areas in Lawrence are seldom however do exist mostly along the perimeter of the city and bordering all three rivers. The Shawsheen as a vast area of forest bordering North Andover allowing areas for wildlife and recreation. In the North section of the city the two cemeteries contain large amounts of forested land and bleeds out into Methuen.

The highest point in Lawrence is the top of Tower Hill in the northwest corner of the city, rising approximately 240 feet (73 m) above sea level. Other hills include Prospect Hill, in the northeast corner of the city, and Mount Vernon, along the southern edge of the city. Most industrial activity also in the low point of the city was concentrated in the flatlands along the rivers.
Hydrology
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Legend

Lawrence Border

Wetlands

- Estuarine and Marine Wetland
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Riverine

Flood Plan

- 100 Year Flood
- 500 Year Flood

0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles

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Wildlife Habitats
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Legend
- Lawrence Border
- NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species
- Certified Vernal Pools

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Topography
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Soils by Slope
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Forest Land
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Legend
- Lawrence Border
- Forest Land
  - 1 Prime Forest Land
  - 2 Prime Forest Land
  - 3 Prime Forest Land
  - Local Importance Forest Land
  - Statewide Importance Forest Land

0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles

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2.4 Open Space and Recreations

Some of the goals and objectives laid out in 2009 Lawrence Open Space Plan:
(Groundworks, Lawrence 2009)

- Increase regular maintenance by dedication of more resources and decrease the amount of litter and debris in parks and open space
- Improve safety and perception of safety through increased enforcement of illegal and unsafe activities in parks and open space
- Increase activity and attendance in parks by creating and implementing more active in-parks programming
- Increase attendance in parks by creating and implementing more passive park elements
- Increase pedestrian and biking activity by encouraging walking and biking for exercise and enhancing safety and connectivity between schools, neighborhoods, and parks
- Increase access to waterfront resources (i.e. rivers, canals) through enhancement and protection

The City of Lawrence is about 7 square miles, which is less than half the size of its surrounding communities. The city is defined by its three rivers, 2 canals, the great stone dam, a tight network of streets, parks and mill buildings. The city is split in half by the Merrimack River. The Shawsheen River has had regular cleanups since 2002; more than 2000 tires have been removed as well as lumber and trash. In 2008 a group also successfully removed a waste oil canister from the river.

Misserville Park located next to the Leonard School and the Spicket River was renovated in 2007 and includes an expanded green space that was reclaimed from the parking lot, a basketball court and the skate-park. In addition, a schoolyard garden was constructed in the school courtyard that includes trees and an educational garden (www.groundworklawrence.org).

The Spicket River Greenway is a trail of green spaces and paths connecting parks and neighborhoods along the Spicket River. It was created from a multi-year collaborative effort that has included the City of Lawrence, Groundwork Lawrence,
numerous other community organizations, and a group of stakeholders. Through the DCR Recreational Trails Grant Program, the City’s Community Development Department and Groundwork Lawrence they have created design documents for portions of the trail after completion of a topographic survey of the entire 2.5-mile section of the Spicket River from Stevens Pond to Scarito Park.

There are 41 publicly owned parks in the City of Lawrence that cover a total of more than 270 acres of open space. Most of these parks are less than 2 acres in size. The Campagnone North Common was included in the original plan for the city. The 17-½ acre park was donated by the Essex Company to the young city of Lawrence. Historically, the houses and buildings facing the Common had specific rules regarding their height, material and uses. Shawsheen River Walkway is a walkway, which moves along the Shawsheen River through Costello Park and behind the South Lawrence East School. The Walkway and Shawsheen is also used an outdoor space for Lawrence High School. Den Rock Park is the city’s largest open space with 120 acres of woodland trails; the park also has many rocks that are used for climbing (www.groundworkslawrence.org).
Den Rock Park is a 120-acre park in South Lawrence that provides for a multitude of activities including hiking, biking, and climbing. The park also has excellent views of the Shawsheen River. The park was designed in 1896 and has had ongoing trail improvements since then.

Campagnone North Common is the largest public park in the city and sits on roughly 17.5 acres. The park was designed in 1848 by Fredric Law Olmsted as an example of a Baroque garden. Currently Groundwork Lawrence is restoring entrances, improving lighting and installing new playgrounds.

Manchester Street Park is a 5-acre park located in North Lawrence along the abandon rail line. The park boarders the spicket river and stevens pond. The park includes community gardens, play area for children and walking paths.
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Parks
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Transportation
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Legend
- Lawrence Border
- Interstate Road
- Bike Trails
- Existing Trail
- Off Road Trail - Potential
- Sidewalk or Roadway Improvement
- SRG - Off Road Trail - Potential
- SRG - Sidewalk or Roadside Trail
- SRG - Existing
- Abandoned or Out of Service
- Active
- Operational
- Proposed

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Schools

Lawrence, Massachusetts

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2.5 Composite Assessment

After reviewing all of the multiple layers available to us in GIS, our team compiled a composite map of the key features we thought were of important value. We highlighted the existing open spaces around the city along with historical districts. We also studied the wetland buffers and flood plains, as they would be important features that would affect our design implantations. Also cited on the map our existing and proposed trails in which we could possibly connect to. All of these important features were carefully studied and were a basis from which we built our team greenway plan.
3.0 Greenway Plan
3.1 Concept

**Big Idea**

- Exploiting the richness of three rivers the Merrimack, Spicket and Shawsheen. Through these three rivers, we are creating two pedestrian greenway loops in both north and south Lawrence.
3.2 Regional Greenway Plan
3.3 Lawrence Greenway Plan
After completing our team composite map we developed a greenway master plan at both the regional scale and city scale. In our regional scale we specifically wanted to connect to major existing open spaces and existing rail trails and trail systems such as the Essex rail trail and Merrimack River Trail. At the city scale we wanted to create greenways that were extensions of these regional connections that would move people from the north and south through the city's downtown and eventually to the Merrimack River. We made strong connections to the Spicket River as well as improving existing streets that move through various important regions throughout the city. From this master plan we moved into four focus areas within the city that we were of greatest importance and areas in which design would greatly benefit both the city and it’s residents.
4.0 Focus Areas
   4.1 Compagnone Common
In this focus area we looked specifically at the connections between the north canal through the Campagnone Common north to the Spicket River Greenway. Our intention was to bring people in the downtown center through street improvements and interesting interactive features along the way. Part of our street improvements move along Appleton and Short Street. Portions of these roads would be closed to vehicular traffic to make them more pedestrian friendly. From our sections and perspectives you can begin to understand the street improvements we would be proposing.
4.2 Broadway and Bike Path Gateway
This focus area looked at the intersections of Broadway and Canal streets as well as the potential gateway space for the proposed rail trail. We felt that this was a high visibility area and highlighting the rail trail would help attract more individuals to this area. North of the gateway we are proposing a large open space off the bike path that would be useful for the users of the bikeway as well as residents in the surrounding areas. Our perspectives show our proposed improvements to the existing rail bridges and potential gateway.
4.3 North Canal and Island
The North Canal Island is separated from Northern Lawrence. We wanted to provide pedestrian and vehicular access onto the island. A mass amount of residential and commercial opportunities are being proposed for the abandoned historic mill buildings. Our team designed a one mile loop for people to escape from the busy city life and enjoy a walk around the north canal while enjoying views of the Merrimack. Several courtyards aren’t being used currently, aside from providing green infrastructure we wanted to keep large open spaces for people to recreate and be able to gather in large numbers. We also wanted to open all bridges that were previously closed which will help give pedestrians access to the North canal island through the ferrous site and a small access bridge near the Pemberton Mill buildings. Sections show our proposal for opening bridges and moving people down to the Merrimack River.
Yellow Section Line
4.4 South Merrimack and T-stop
In this Focus area we looked at the connection between North and South Lawrence through the Duck Bridge. Our main idea was to improve the unused space along the river and to bring people to the river through a series of pathways. We also looked at the unused open spaces in South Lawrence and how we could move people from the proposed apartments along the river to the wildlife areas to the South through improved pathways and open parks. Another huge asset to the city of Lawrence is the MBTA stop that runs from Boston, through Lawrence and to points north of Lawrence. We felt there was a need for a place for people to relax while waiting for the train and to better highlight the importance of the MBTA stop. We achieved that by creating an open park that allows for both passive and active activities adjacent to the MBTA stop and residential communities.
5.0 Conclusion

The city of Lawrence has many unique features including many historic districts, and the Merrimack River. The city contains a vast assortment of cultures and dating back to the industrial times of the Pemberton Mill workers. The dense histories of the people, architecture, rivers, and wetlands have shaped the city of Lawrence into what it is today. The greenway promotes the movement of wildlife and people from area to area in and around Lawrence. The proposed greenway and its connected trail systems surrounding it will give pedestrians an access route throughout Lawrence’s cultural, historic and natural histories.