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Visions for Waterville's Future: Perceptions of its Residents

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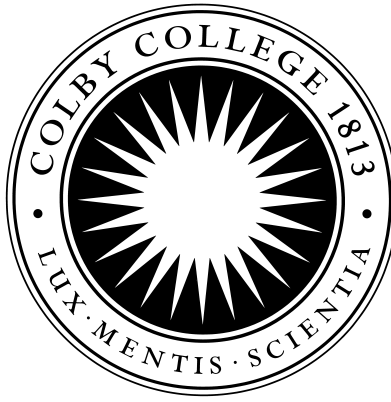
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Visions for Waterville's Future: Perceptions of its Residents

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ABSTRACT

Mills and factories in the United States have steadily been closing down as industry is outsourced in the globalized economy. Cities that were once prosperous face decay and often have no hopeful future outlook. Post-industrial towns face major unemployment and poverty and are not typically places for re-investment. But Rust Belt cities like Baltimore, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, Milwaukee and St. Louis are not the only post-industrial hubs that are struggling. Many small towns in rural areas once thrived from manufacturing and are becoming forgotten. Local governments, policy makers, urban planners, developers and scholars are working to figure out how to revive these dying cities and towns.

Some scholars argue that making cities diverse, inclusive, artsy, foody, gay-friendly, healthy, vibrant and creative is the answer to the post-industrial problem. In doing so, cities and towns will attract what they call the “Creative Class,” a large, highly-educated and creative chunk of the labor force that associated with economic growth. Waterville, Maine is a rural, post-industrial mill town that has been plagued by poverty and unemployment since the decline of its paper mills and factories during the twentieth century. This town is seeing major changes as a Waterville college is pouring millions of dollars into its downtown to revitalize it. Partners in the revitalization effort seek to bring vibrancy, economic growth and employment through their work and money. Colby College and the City of Waterville are employing many of the strategies suggested by Creative Class scholars. This essay seeks to examine the varying attitudes, desires and opinions of the town’s community members. Will a lack of consensus impede the revitalization efforts?

CHAPTER ONE – Waterville's history

Waterville was incorporated in 1802 along the Kennebec River with approximately eight hundred people. A bridge was built across the Kennebec connecting Waterville to Winslow, which attracted many traders to move there. At that time, Waterville was an agricultural center and offered employment in the shipbuilding and lumber industries. French-Canadians from Quebec began to permanently settle in 1827 (Plocher, 2007). Immigrants moved to Waterville as the city developed; in 1830 the Kennebec Road/Canada Road (currently U.S. 201) was completed and offered a direct route from Quebec to the town. In the 1830s a regular route for passenger and freight steamboat services was established to and from Boston for reasonable prices.

Waterville's intellectual and political activity and reach outside of Kennebec County has always been linked to the colleges in the town. Waterville College's (Colby College's) presence in Waterville allowed the town to be a stop on a circuit of lecturers including abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison (Plocher, 2007). Garrison, Elijah Parish Lovejoy (a Waterville College graduate) and other abolitionists inspired growth of local anti-slavery societies.

Waterville had a history of economic growth and development that was largely spurred by the railroad, mills and successful entrepreneurs. Waterville was an established railroad town in the 1840s with the Androscoggin, Kennebec, and Penobscot Railroad offering rail service across Maine and replacing river travel. Railroad travel to and from Maine brought more immigrants to the town, making Waterville an ethnically and culturally diverse locale in a homogenous part of the country (Plocher, 2007). Job postings were spread throughout cities like New York and Boston and led to the immigration of Syrian and Lebanese families in the 1860s.

In the 19th century, Waterville was a hub of entrepreneurship and innovation. C.F. Hathaway established a Baptist newspaper in 1847 that failed and later created the Hathaway Shirt Company, a shirt manufacturer, which would later become one of Waterville's largest employers (Congdon-Martin, 1998). Hathaway's printing press became the *Eastern Mail* and later was taken over by the *Waterville Sentinel*, now called the *Morning Sentinel*. The Ticonic Water Power and Manufacturing Company was formed in 1866 and built a dam across the Kennebec River, utilizing the town's natural resources. The company constructed a large cotton mill named the Lockwood Company. Soon after, a second mill was added and the whole mill complex employed over 1,300 people (Plocher, 2007).

All of the manufacturing in Waterville brought a local industrial revolution providing jobs for anyone who wanted one. French-Canadians immigrated to the town for the economic prosperity and relative freedom in the U.S. and specifically Waterville, and they immigrated to Waterville to escape poor farm conditions and British rule in Quebec (Rowe, 1999). The Franco-Americans primarily lived together in the "Plains" (present-day South End neighborhood) close to the mills and downtown (Bernier, 1981). The "Plains" became a city within Waterville with its own Catholic church, school, stores and other businesses. Waterville was a vibrant, growing city and a place to move to. Waterville's strong economy led to outside investment in the town. Waterville out-bid Portland and many other cities to become the home of Maine Central Railroad car locomotive repair shops. This service center brought hundreds of new jobs to the area.

In 1892, the Hollingsworth and Whitney pulp and paper mills opened in Winslow, providing even more jobs for Waterville residents. Waterville's economy was booming. The Riverview Worsted Mill was built in Waterville at this time (later called the Wyandotte Worsted

Company). The Two Cent Bridge was constructed to make commuting across the Kennebec River to and from Winslow possible for a two-cent fee (Plocher, 2007). The Two Cent Bridge is the last surviving footbridge in the United States. Waterville's immense development attracted more immigrants including more Lebanese immigrants as well as Jews from Poland and Russia who formed the Beth Israel Congregation in 1902.

In the 19th century, there was great civic pride and solidarity within Waterville. Watervillians were invested in the success of one another and the city's prosperity as a whole. In the 1860s Waterville College had low enrollment and lack of funding after the post-Civil War recession and nearly perished until Gardner Colby, a businessman who spent some of his childhood in Waterville, gave a large grant to the college and renamed it Colby University (Plocher, 2007). Waterville was a town dedicated to its soldiers; over five hundred Waterville residents fought in the war and the Hathaway Shirt Company outfitted the soldiers (Bangs, 1902).

Waterville's growth was not only in population and business, but also in infrastructure and public resources. Waterville became the fifteenth city in Maine in January 1888 (Marriner, n.d.). There was growth in every part of the community. The Messalonskee Stream was polluted where it passed through Waterville, so Harvey D. Eaton figured out a solution to make China Lake the water source for the Kennebec Water District (Plocher, 2007). This district would be its own body and serve multiple cities and towns without having to reach the entire county. A streetcar system was established between Oakland and Waterville in 1888, first pulled by horses and later powered by electricity (Morrione, n.d.). Educational resources like the Waterville Free Library and Kiest Business College (later renamed to Morgan Thomas Business College) were

established at the start of the 20th century. Waterville also continued to grow as a hub of innovation. Alvin O. Lombard invented the Lombard Log Hauler, the first commercially viable continuous tread tractor and predecessor to tanks and construction machinery. Martin Keyes developed the process to create high quality paper plates from spruce fiber (Plocher, 2007). Keyes founded the Keyes Fibre Company in 1901 and relocated the factory to Waterville and Fairfield in 1907 (Plocher, 2007).

Waterville was a thriving center for culture and tourism in the early 20th century. There were several fine hotels in the downtown, a new opera house, vaudeville acts, plays, silent films, talkies and more (Plocher, 2007). Waterville's downtown was lively and full of commerce. Stores were opening for business and the streets and shops were always filled with shoppers and visitors. Sterns Department Store, Dunham's Maine Clothing, Levine's Clothing and W.B. Arnold's Hardware Store thrived. Waterville was a destination.

Downtown Waterville in the 19th Century



In the early 20th century, Colby College was growing; however, the college had no room to expand because the industries boxed it in. In 1929, Colby College trustees decided to relocate the campus from Downtown Waterville to Mayflower Hill. Then-president of Colby, Franklin Johnson, believed that Colby needed a more professional, quiet, rural setting to prevent distraction and promote liberal arts studies (Marriner, 1963). Mayflower Hill has historically been an agricultural landscape dominated by orchards and farms. Colby's move to Mayflower Hill and its subsequent displacement of agriculture is symbolic of the changing needs of Waterville at the time. The town and college fundraised together to ensure that Colby College would stay in Waterville and not relocate to another city (Marriner, 1963). The move of the college was complete by 1952.

Economic growth in Waterville halted during the Great Depression and the city's economy has not seen the strength it possessed in the mid 19th century to early 20th century; however, growth in the city still continued after the depression. Waterville fared better than most cities during the Great Depression, but still struggled. Trolley services were rarely used and railroad services were discontinued (Plocher, 2007). After the wars, Waterville continued to grow. In 1923, The Sisters Hospital was established. In the 1930s, Thayer Hospital opened on Main Street and soon after Waterville Osteopathic Hospital (now called Inland Hospital) was built. Both hospitals relocated to newer and larger facilities in the 1950s. In 1956, Morgan Thomas College moved out of the downtown to a new location and was renamed Thomas College (Plocher, 2007). Thomas College was then a four-year college for bachelor's degrees rather than degrees in business. But growth did not last forever in Waterville. It started to slow when textile plants opened in the southern United States. In the 1930s, Lockwood Company could not match the competition. In the 1950s it closed.

Waterville reshaped itself substantially during the Urban Renewal period of the 1960s. Passenger trains stopped traveling to the city and Interstate 95 and cars took the railroad's place. The Urban Renewal initiative led to demolishing many historic buildings including the Elmwood Hotel, Colby Memorial Hall and the First Congregational Church, prior centers for economic, community and faith activity (Plocher, 2007). Waterville's downtown saw the most changes from Urban Renewal. Residences at the Head of Falls river lots were removed along with residences on Front and Water Streets, two streets perpendicular to Main Street in the downtown. The biggest change downtown was the clearance of Charles Street to create the Concourse, a large parking lot and complex next to Main Street (Plocher, 2007).

The demolition of much of Downtown Waterville and the car-focused culture that was spurred in the 1960s led to the demise of commerce. Chain discount stores moved into upper Main Street on a property next to the interstate highway. The vibrancy and life of Waterville and its downtown disappeared and the city went from a place to be to a place to leave. The accessibility of cars also led to people and institutions moving out of Waterville into more rural and suburban areas. Colby College had already moved from the center of Waterville to Mayflower Hill, the Wyandotte Worsted Company and Thomas College relocated to the south of Waterville on West River Road. Waterville was on the decline after the Depression and Urban Renewal finished the town off.

CHAPTER TWO – Waterville today

Today, Waterville's economy is weak and consistently performs lower than Maine's economy as well as the United States economy. According to the ACS Census, Waterville's 2015 unemployment rate was thirteen percent compared to seven percent in Maine and eight percent in the United States. Waterville's 2015 median household income was \$33,251, while Maine's was \$49,331 and the United States' was \$53,889. Waterville per capita income was \$22,939 versus \$27,665 in Maine and \$28,930 in the United States. Lastly, twenty-two percent of Waterville's population age 18 to 64 is in poverty compared to fourteen percent in Maine and fifteen percent in the United States (ACS, 2015).

Since the closure of Waterville's mills and factories, the city has seen consistent economic decline. Unemployment has doubled since 1990 and the unemployment rate of the city has consistently been higher than Kennebec County as a whole since 1990. In the past, the majority of the labor force worked industrial positions; today, eighty percent of the labor force is in management, sales, office and service positions. There are only five employers of over four hundred employees: Maine General Health, Colby College, Inland Hospital, Waterville School Dept. and Huhtamaki (Maine D.O.L., 2012).

The business landscape has changed considerably from an economy of thriving local businesses to one of struggling local businesses and increased corporate retail and service chain stores, businesses and restaurants. During Waterville's period of growth and stability, the main center of business was Waterville's downtown area. Today, the city has three main economic centers: Kennedy Memorial Drive (an exit off of Interstate 95), Upper Main Street (an exit off of Interstate 95) and Downtown Waterville. In the past fifteen years, a commercial center on Upper

Main Street has grown to include a shopping center housing Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Staples, Ruby Tuesday and other large chain stores. In the past fifteen years, commercial developments on Kennedy Memorial Drive have also grown substantially. This street off of I-95 is filled with chain businesses including: Dunkin' Donuts, McDonald's, Hampton Inn, Applebee's, AutoZone, Flagship Cinema, J&S Oil and more.

Waterville's historic centers of business are in decay. College Avenue, a street perpendicular with Main Street near Downtown Waterville was once an economically prosperous street occupied by many thriving local businesses. College has lost a car dealership, a carwash, John Martin's Manor Restaurant and several other businesses. Over the past fifteen years the only newly constructed building was a Burger King that replaced a prior Burger King demolished on the same site. College Avenue is in steady decline and is fairly representative of Waterville's past and present.

Waterville's poor economic condition impacts the quality of the city's public schools due to a low property tax base. The majority of students in elementary school through high school perform below proficiency in English literacy and mathematics. Maine Department of Education's No Child Left Behind Report Card scores all school districts in the state of Maine based on student performance on exams testing English language arts/literacy and mathematics. In 2015-2016, fifty-seven percent of third through eighth graders in Waterville Public Schools did not receive proficient scores in English language arts/literacy, and sixty-nine percent of students did not receive proficient scores in mathematics. In the same year, fifty-seven percent of students in Waterville's public high school did not receive proficient scores in English language

arts/literacy, and eighty-one percent of students did not receive proficient scores in mathematics (Maine D.O.E., 2016).

Waterville's public schools do not prepare students for college or professional success. Greatschools.org gives Waterville schools a *City Rating* of 4/10, based on standardized test performance. Waterville High School students perform with 51% subject proficiency on state exit exams and College Board exams (on par with the average performance in the state of Maine). Waterville High School received a *College Readiness Index* of 19.9/100 based on exam scores of students who took AP coursework. Waterville High's graduation rate is 75% (U.S. News and World Report, 2016).

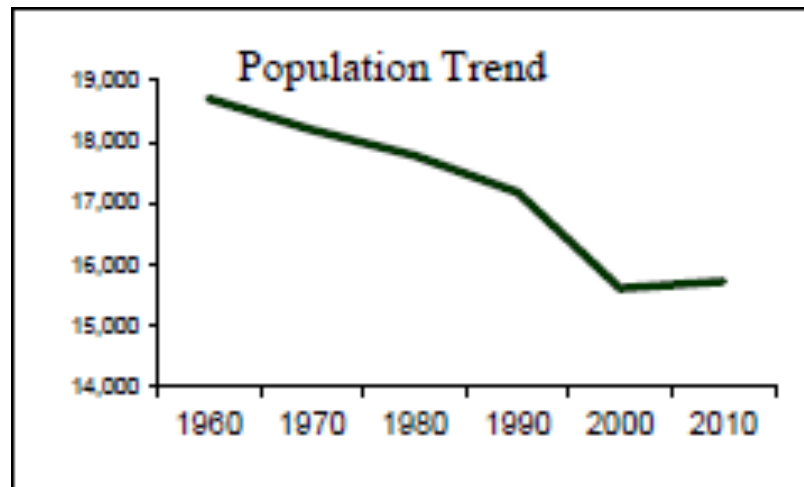
Waterville is a fairly safe city with an average crime level. Waterville receives a citydata.com crime index score of 336.8, slightly higher than the United States average of 287.5, based on occurrences of crimes per 100,000 people. Waterville's violent crime rate and property crime rate were both higher than the U.S. average in 2014. There were 578 instances of theft, ninety-eight burglaries, twenty-four assaults, fourteen auto thefts, eleven robberies, four acts of arson, seventeen rapes and one murder in 2014. There were thirty-five registered sex offenders living in Waterville as of January 2017.

There is a large problem of opioid abuse among people everywhere in Maine. In 2016, there were 286 deaths among Mainers due to opioid use (Lawlor, 2016). The problem is described as an opioid epidemic. The drug crisis in Maine is primarily fueled by heroin, prescription opioids and fentanyl (often mixed with heroin). Millions of tax dollars are spent each year on drug treatment, prevention and enforcement efforts in the state. Waterville runs numerous programs to fight the opiate problem including "Operation HOPE" (Heroin Opiate

Prevention Effort), with a focus on treatment rather than diversion (Lawlor, 2016). Deaths and arrests due to opiates occur yearly in the city. A twenty-one year old graduate of Waterville High School describes the reality of the heroin epidemic in his local circle saying that all of his friends are using the drug and have been since high school. Many students at Waterville High are using heroin (Wise, 2017).

Today, Waterville has a population of 15,722 people, of which ninety-four percent are white, two percent are Hispanic or Latino, two percent are two or more races, one percent are Asian and one percent are Black or African American. Waterville is a city with a fairly old population: the median age in the city is thirty-six years old, fifty-one percent of 6,370 houses are family homes, thirty-seven percent of homes have one or more people sixty years or older (Census, 2017). Twenty-three percent of Waterville's population is under twenty years old, fifteen percent are in their twenties, eleven percent are in their thirties, twenty-eight percent are between ages forty and fifty-nine and twenty three percent are over sixty years old. Most members of the labor force are in the service industry. Most service workers have lived in Waterville their entire lives and when the mills closed down they had no other choice but to work low-paying jobs at the chain stores that opened up in town. A large portion of Waterville is extremely poor; twenty-seven percent of the town brings in a household income of less than \$15,000 (Census, 2017). The lack of work and liveliness of the town causes it to struggle to retain and attract young professionals to live there. The only young professionals present either work for Colby College or one of the local hospitals. Even Colby currently struggles to recruit and retain young faculty because there are not many young people around.

Waterville Population Changes



Although Waterville is a college town with two colleges, Colby College and Thomas College, it does not feel like one. Both beautiful campuses are tucked away, isolated from the town- very different from when the two colleges were near the downtown. Because the colleges are removed from the city center, shops, restaurants, sidewalks, parks and the downtown are not crowded with youth. In fact the city is not crowded with pedestrians at all. When students leave their campuses, it is typical that they leave for very specific reasons such as a visit to Wal-Mart, CVS Pharmacy or a restaurant. Both colleges offer everything that their students need, such as bookstores, dining halls, athletic centers and places to hang out. About half of Colby College students have cars on campus, so students do leave the hill; however, students do not make a strong presence in town. President Laurie LaChance of Thomas College says that most students do not leave their campus for fun because they do not have extra money lying around to visit Waterville's shops, café's and restaurants.

Colby College is an elite liberal arts college with an enrollment of 1,857 undergraduate students from all over the globe. It is perched on top of Mayflower Hill with a beautiful, rural

campus on 714 acres of green, well-groomed grass, covered by over 1400 trees, colorful flowers, red brick academic buildings and young, bright students. The institution is wealthy with an endowment of \$745 million and 63% of its students receive no financial aid (U.S. News & World Report, 2016). Graduates of the college are often leaders in their fields and achieve great career success. Colby graduates rarely stay in Waterville after finishing school (a trend among college graduates in Maine).

Colby students have a reputation in town for being entitled, wealthy, privileged and disrespectful. Of course, this is only a stereotype that does not accurately represent the entire student body and is not used by everyone in Waterville, but it is a reputation nonetheless. Because students do not go into town often, it is the few, negative experiences that stick out to various folks. Each Thursday many students participate in “bar night” and visit various Waterville bars. Colby students are known for being rowdy, loud and disrespectful on these nights and sometimes are not welcomed back to certain venues for damaging the places and leaving a large mess. Colby also has a great reputation for having students, faculty and staff that really care about Waterville and volunteer their time at local non-profits. The college is especially known for its “Colby Cares About Kids” program, a volunteer mentoring program. Over five-hundred Colby mentors are paired with area youngsters at fifteen sites throughout the Waterville area.

Thomas College is an undergraduate and graduate institution that offers Master of Business Administration, Master of Science, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in Arts degrees. The college is home to 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students and sixty-three percent of faculty work fulltime. Thomas College is located on a

beautiful 120-acre residential campus. The student body is fairly local, seventy-eight percent of students are from Maine, seventeen percent are from New England, and five percent are from other states and countries. The majority of Thomas students are first generation to attend college and on financial aid, sixty-seven percent are first generation to attend college students and fifty-five percent of students are eligible for Federal Pell Grants, the majority of other students are on some form of financial aid. The College's mission is to "prepare students for success in their personal and professional lives, and for leadership and service in their communities" (Thomas College). Thomas College is pre-professional with degrees focused on quality job placement and lifelong success. Most graduates stay in Waterville or elsewhere in Maine after graduating; ninety-four percent of Thomas graduates have a job within ninety days of graduation. Thomas students are not very visible in the Waterville community. Like Colby students, they are there, but not seen.

My research suggests that Waterville's population is comprised of various groups of people. One group is the "Waterville Traditionalists" who have always lived there and always will. Members of this group have lived in Waterville during its booming days and worked at the mills and factories or reaped the rewards that came with the thriving economy at the time. Many of these folks are retired, well-established here or receiving government aid. Another group is the "Waterville Professionals." The "Waterville Professionals" have lived here for a while and work well-paying professional jobs as professors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, entrepreneurs, etc. This group is very active in the community through participation in local organizations, religious institutions and the colleges. Another large group is the "Waterville Working and Service Class," made up of members of the labor force in their late teens to their seventies. This group is the backbone of the local service economy, but makes barely enough to live. Lastly there are the

“Waterville College Students” who study at the two colleges in town. Colby has a large number of very wealthy students; and Thomas has students mostly in the lower and middle classes. There is tension between the two groups of students for class-related reasons.

CHAPTER THREE – Waterville and the downtown

Waterville, Maine is fourteen square miles in area, alongside the Kennebec River and very green. Trees and grassy areas are spread throughout the city; however, most areas are developed across the town. There is a strong car culture with few pedestrians walking on sidewalks and fewer cyclists, especially in the winter months. Although there is not a culture of walking and biking throughout the town, there are many trails and parks that people take advantage of for recreation. People utilize the trails for mountain biking and hiking in the warmer months and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter months.

One popular outdoor recreational spot is the Quarry Road Recreation Area, which offers ten kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails and the only snowmaking capability in the greater Waterville area on three km of trails. Another popular park is the North Street Recreation Area, a public park with a municipal swimming pool, basketball courts, tennis courts, a picnic area, horseshoe pits, soccer fields, a playground and a river walk. The North Street Park is filled with children and families in the summer, and the Alford Youth Center YMCA (AYC) next door is filled with children in the winter. The AYC offers programming for children and people of all ages in the greater Waterville area throughout the year including daycare, climbing wall and play facilities, music and arts, sustainable gardens and mentoring services. The AYC is also home to many athletic leagues and classes.

People in the greater Waterville area also utilize Colby College's outdoor facilities and trails. The College's Perkins Arboretum offers a free four-mile trail network for hiking, cross-country skiing and running in a forest environment. The Arboretum is filled with birch, maple and oak trees and is a quiet escape from the city. Colby College also has a baseball and softball complex, football field, hockey rink and basketball courts that are used by students, faculty and staff, the public and local sports teams. Sports leagues, teams and camps utilize the athletic fields and facilities in the warm months and Alfond Ice Rink in the cold months. Colby College also opens its music and arts programming to the public.

The Colby Museum of Art is "a central site for intellectual engagement, artistic contemplation, and social activity" (Colby College, 2017). The Colby Museum of Art is known as the leading art museum in Maine, offering 64,000 square feet of attractive galleries of mostly American art and learning spaces. The top notch collections includes works of Maya Lin, Fairfield Porter, Alex Katz, Richard Estes, Pablo Picasso, Courbet, Corot, Daubigny, Bouguereau and more. In February 2017 the Museum received a gift worth more than \$100 million from longtime Colby benefactors Peter and Paula Lunder. The gift includes 1,150 artworks and funds to establish the Lunder Institute for American Art. College officials said the transformative gift will make Colby College unique among liberal arts colleges, offering a world-class art museum and an international research center for the study of American art.

Although Colby is growing and developing its facilities, Waterville does not see the same progress. Most of its buildings were constructed in the early 20th century and have not been renovated, many storefronts are empty, streets and sidewalks are not well maintained, and besides its chain-stores, very little commerce appears to take place there. The town has an

outdated feel. The two entrances to the city are filled with chain shops, restaurants, services, gas stations and more. Besides the two main entrances off of Interstate 95, the city's older retail spaces are not occupied, many are falling apart, and those that remain open appear to be struggling. The city's neighborhoods and streets are filled with extended side-hall homes from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that have been converted to multi-occupancy homes. Many homes are over fifty years old and in poor physical shape. There are very few new homes or new buildings built in Waterville and it is rare to see homes with for sale signs on their lawns. Most neighborhoods are fairly poor, except those near Colby's campus.

Downtown Waterville is at the heart of the town, located on the banks of the Kennebec River. It is on Main Street, running parallel with the Kennebec River, and the downtown area extends out slightly onto perpendicular side streets. Main Street has fast one-way car traffic and is not viewed as pedestrian friendly. The downtown has a practical, rather than an enjoyable feel. People typically drive to the downtown, park, shop and leave. Waterville's rich history and changes in industry and manufacturing have left an impact on the character of the downtown. The beautiful brick buildings from the downtown's past are now structurally poor, boarded up and in need of revitalization.

Main Street has seven structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Two Cent Bridge is one of the structures on the National Register of Historic places that goes across the Kennebec River next to the downtown and has been maintained since it was rebuilt in 1903. The bridge is a popular landmark in Waterville and attracts tourists to Waterville because of its historic status as the last toll footbridge in the United States. It also is used to access trails across the river in Winslow. The Two Cent Bridge is located at Head of Falls, an open grassy

area with a large parking lot. In 2015, the City of Waterville announced that they received a grant of \$150,000 to build a river walk at the Head of Falls. The City is working to secure more funding to make this river walk a reality in the next few years.

The downtown fabric remains from the radical transformation of the 1960s urban renewal project. Remnants of urban renewal include poor one-way traffic patterns, parking lots and narrow sidewalks. The traffic patterns that remain from urban renewal push one-way traffic southbound through and around the downtown, rather than inviting customers and hang out and visit shops, restaurants, cultural venues, businesses and green spaces. Many buildings with historic and aesthetic value remain standing; however, these buildings need renovations. The surrounding mills remain standing and are unoccupied. The washed-up buildings and abandoned mills give the downtown character, but symbolize the downward trend of the city's economy.

Downtown Waterville Today



CHAPTER FOUR – The revitalization efforts

Urban renewal experienced an intense phase in the mid twentieth century after the Housing Act of 1949 and 1954 in areas of moderate to high-density urban land use. Many cities in America have seen very little development since this time due to the closure of factories and mills. People are now starting to move back into cities and planners are working to keep them while maintaining social equity in the face of redevelopment. Many small to large cities across the United States are working to revitalize urban areas without gentrifying them. Strategies to do this include leveraging anchor institutions (hospitals and colleges), maximizing natural resources, leveraging existing buildings and infrastructure, weaving new architecture with existing architecture, leveraging underutilized land and leveraging downtown areas. Planners have found strategies to revitalize post-industrial cities including incorporating incremental inflow, historical tax credits and recruiting new businesses (Gamble & Heyda, 2016).

Waterville is facing the same questions as many other post-industrial cities across the United States. Since his inauguration as Colby College's 20th president in 2014, David A. Greene has consistently emphasized the College's commitment to help drive positive change for the city of Waterville. While he was the Executive Vice President at the University of Chicago, Greene played a large role in efforts to revitalize areas in South Side Chicago. He is now working hard to achieve similar results in Waterville. Beginning in March 2015, a steering committee comprised of Colby College representatives and civic and business leaders formed to discuss and plan a long-term revitalization project to make downtown Waterville a more vibrant, dynamic destination for residents, visitors and businesses. Since the initial research and stakeholder workshops, most of the planning process has been completed. Research and traffic

studies have concluded, properties have been purchased, and some stakeholders have begun developing their new properties or buildings.

The City of Waterville and members of the stakeholder workshops agreed on principles for the revitalization efforts (Waterville City Council, February 2016):

- **Leverage Existing Strengths:** Build upon existing arts programming, create public art in key locations, strengthen connections to the waterfront, connect Main Street to Hathaway Creative Center
- **Attract More Visitors and Residents:** Build a student residence downtown, public realm improvements for visitors, welcoming gateway improvements, parking strategy
- **Increase Economic Activity:** Create new generators such as a hotel and student residence, address vacant space downtown, attract investment by others, target key businesses to downtown
- **Create a Sense of Place:** Improve streetscape and pedestrian experience, attract strategic retailers, build upon existing programs
- **Organize Around a Plan:** Create consensus and continue a process of public engagement, collaboration, and implementation

The downtown revitalization project partners aim to achieve the goals laid out in their planning principles by transforming the gateway to downtown, converting traffic to two-way, improving streetscape and sidewalk design, increasing retail activity/economic development, increasing residential density to stimulate economic activity, exploring a comprehensive parking strategy, relocating the Farmers Market, bringing a hotel to Main Street, integrating the arts, developing programming capacity and connecting the downtown to the waterfront (Colby College, 2017).

***TIMELINE:** Spring 2015: initial research and stakeholder workshops, June 2015: Spring Street traffic intersection study, October 2015: Waterfront public workshop, January 2016: MDOT downtown transportation study, February 2016: City Council adopts revitalization plan, April and May 2016: Downtown business and resident meetings, May 2016 Public traffic meeting, June 2016: Downtown revitalization wrap-up meeting, Fall 2016: Transportation study concludes, river walk project public meetings, and ongoing implementation of priority initiatives and continuing to refine planning.*

The Creative Class: A Modern Theory to Economic Growth in Cities

Colby College is extremely interested and invested in revitalizing its city's downtown area. The inauguration of David Greene, the College's twentieth president, was a key moment not only for the downtown's future physical assets, but possibly for the future of the city's minimal young professional labor force. Increasing the downtown's population density with two-hundred college students in Colby's dormitory, creating partnerships with innovative STEM employers like CGI (an international information technology firm), rerouting traffic patterns to be more pedestrian friendly, planting shrubs and creating green spaces are ways that the College and City of Waterville are working together to make the downtown a vibrant place that people want to be. The key people that David Greene and the partners are trying to attract are college students and creative, smart young professionals.

The principles for the revitalization efforts focus on building upon arts programming, creating public art displays, utilizing existing water features, attracting more visitors, residents

and businesses, improving streetscape and pedestrian experience, and organizing the efforts through public engagement and collaboration. To some extent the work done by Greene and his team at the University of Chicago and at Colby College draws on the efforts of a group of scholars who study what they call the “Creative Class.” The Creative Class is Richard Florida’s interpretation of Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith’s ideas on “the New Class.” This theory argued that a New Class of highly-educated workers arose in the 1960s and 1970s, who engage in enjoyable and fulfilling work as a result of an affluent society (Galbraith, 1984).

Florida is an American urban studies theorist and economist who focuses on social and economic theory. Florida is well known for his concept of the creative class. Florida defines the creative class as an economic class whose economic function “both underpins and informs its members’ social, cultural and lifestyle choices.” The creative class is made up of professionals who add economic value to their work through their creativity. The Creative Class is made up of thirty-eight million Americans (thirty percent of the U.S. workforce). It has grown from three million people in 1900. In 1950, the class grew steadily from ten percent of the workforce to twenty percent in the 1970s and 1980s, it reached twenty-five percent in 1991 and thirty percent in 1999 (Florida, 2002). Florida breaks down the creative class into two sub groups: The Super Creative Core and Creative Professionals.

The Super Creative Core are paid to regularly produce new art, products, ideas, media, forms or designs that are readily transferable and widely useful (Florida, 2002). This group contains fifteen million workers, which has grown from one million members in 1900. Creative Professionals are highly educated and draw on complex knowledge to problem solve, regularly think, exercise discretion and use unique and creative approaches to situations they encounter (Florida, 2002). The service class is growing along with the Creative Class; however, its

occupations are low-end, low-wage and low-autonomy jobs. The Service Class has fifty-five million workers (forty-three percent of the workforce). It has grown from five million workers in 1900 to its large figure today. Florida believes that the growth of the Service Class is in response to the demands of the Creative Economy.

Creative Class Values

Florida outlines the key values of the Creative Class in his book, *Rise of the Creative Class*.

- *Individuality*- Creative class members strive to have individualistic identities which reflect their creativity. They do not want to conform to organizational, institutional or group norms.
- *Meritocracy*- Members value hard work, challenge and stimulation. Money is not as important as a status marker for achievement- many members of the Creative Class try to defy the economic class that they were born into; however, most members of the creative class make high-paying salaries.
- *Diversity and Openness*- Creative Class members strongly favor organizations and places where they feel that anyone can fit in and can succeed. These people are not grounded to one location and move around to different parts of the U.S. where they are not natives. A place or company is “open” if they are accepting to diverse people and the queer community. Creative hubs are typically covered with rainbow flags and symbols of inclusion.

Creative Class members need to live in a place that offers stimulating and creative environments. In Florida’s studies, he has found that many will not consider taking jobs in certain cities or regions. Sometimes location is the primary criterion. This is why Waterville and

Colby College are investing so much money into their downtown. By making this hub more vibrant, inclusive, beautiful, interesting, diverse and young, there is a better chance that the College will be able to attract more top candidates to work at their school and the city will be able to attract more companies open up offices in the city. Colby College leveraged its connections to encourage CGI, an international information technology consulting firm to open an office in Downtown Waterville. The Harold Alfond Foundation is starting a new grant program to help Maine college graduates pay off college debts by working in a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) position in the state. By using economic incentives and making Downtown Waterville more lively, creative and diverse, Colby College and the City of Waterville are hoping to attract the Creative Class to live in their city.

Creativity and Experience

Creative Class people desire a lifestyle that is comprised of multi-dimensional, high quality experiences (Florida, 2002). Members of this class value outdoor recreation highly and tend to live in areas where the outdoors are a big part of peoples' lives. Waterville has a strong appeal to those who value the outdoors because of its many trails, rivers, lakes and close proximity to the coast and mountains. These young professionals also like active, participatory recreational activities, street-level culture filled with cafes, sidewalk musicians, art galleries and bistros. Florida believes the creative class likes this street-level culture because the line between participant and observer or creativity and creators is blurred. Currently Downtown Waterville has very weak street-level culture, which is why many proponents of the revitalization efforts think that a vibrant downtown with strong street-level culture could lead to future economic growth. A revitalized downtown is not just more enjoyable to those currently living in Waterville, but it also makes the city more attractive to prospective businesses.

Florida suggests that cities build a climate that attracts and retains people. To do this, cities must make a direct effort to cultivate diversity and invest in lifestyle amenities, rather than investing in financial incentives to attract companies or retail complexes. While no city is the same, he thinks that investment in urban parks, bike lanes, off-road trails, an environment attractive to young professionals, cultural and music venues and any other ways to showcase the value of diversity and creativity (Florida, 2002).

Criticism of the Creative Class Argument

While Florida's book is a bestseller and his concept is extremely popular in city development, the Creative Class has many critics. Critics argue that the economics behind Florida's creative class theory do not work. In *The New Geography of Jobs*, Enrico Moretti argues that Florida is wrong when he claims that making a city an interesting place to live leads to economic development. Moretti uses many examples of cities that Florida labels creative hubs to show that cities have greater vibrant cultural amenities after economic development takes place. The author gives an example of Seattle, Washington, a city that was economically struggling until Microsoft relocated there in the 1980s from New Mexico. Microsoft's move there made the city a booming, innovative tech hub with massive economic growth. The large numbers of "creative workers" created a demand for a rich cultural scene which came about after the tech industry took off. Moretti's argument could be summed up by saying that creative, cultural scenes come about following economic development, not vice-versa.

Moretti looks at Berlin, Germany as a city with a thriving art and culture scene, but a poor economy. Even though Florida's theory would say that the creative class brings a thriving economy, the city has had the highest unemployment rate in Germany over the past ten years and

the second lowest growth in per capita income. The creative class is in Berlin, but they are unemployed.

Steven Malanga is the George M. Yeager Fellow at the Manhattan Institute who argues that Florida's ideas are based on wishful thinking. Malanga believes that the Internet generation formed its new capitalist structure during a speculative bubble when billions of dollars of free-flowing investment capital was available. He disputes Florida's concept of the creative class and its positive impact on economic growth, arguing that Florida's creative class cities do not produce jobs or high-growth companies at a rapid rate, and these cities do not successfully attract and retain residents. Malanga believes that economic growth in cities stems from lower taxes.

Critics like Malanga point to Florida's lack of data showing if cities he labels "creative" have vibrant economies that perform well over long periods of time. Malanga uses Census data to show that some of Florida's favored cities are "chronic underperformers." The author looks at the top performers on Florida's list and compares them to the overall U.S. jobs economy and finds that the top creative cities increase their employment base by slightly more than seventeen percent a year. Cities that score lowest on Florida's list like Las Vegas, Oklahoma City and Memphis have large job growth at nineteen percent since 1993 (Malanga, 2004). Because the least creative cities out perform the overall U.S. economy's job growth, Malanga believes that Florida's creative class theory is unsuccessful.

Malanga argues that Florida's method of identifying innovative hubs should be based on numerical data rather than an anecdotal approach of viewing a city as an entrepreneurial center. Malanga cites a 2001 study from the National Commission on Entrepreneurship that ranks United States cities on how well they hatch high-growth companies. By calculating the percentage of companies in a local economy that grew by fifteen percent a year for five

consecutive years in the mid 1990s, the study finds that the fastest growing, entrepreneurial companies are not in high tech industries, but are widely distributed across all industries. Because of this, Malanga criticizes Florida's approach to viewing economic growth in creative cities as something spurred by the tech industry.

The author also asserts that Florida's creative cities do not do a good job of attracting and retaining people. Malanga uses 2000 Census data on New York City and the greater San Francisco metro area to show that creative cities are actually facing domestic out-migration. New York (one of Florida's most creative cities) lost 545,000 more residents than it gained in the late 1990s and San Francisco lost 200,000 more people than the city gained. Five of the ten cities at the top of the creative index had large losses of U.S. residents at the end of the 1990s, while some of the cities at the bottom of Florida's creative index had large gains in residents (Malanga, 2004). Cities that are labeled not creative with large population gains include Las Vegas, Memphis and Tampa Bay.

Lastly, Malanga believes that Florida's whole approach, centered around attractions like an arts and music scene that can be artificially produced by government officials and policy makers, is flawed. The author postulates that the cultural attributes of cities that Florida admires are not products of government planning, but spontaneous developments financed by private-sector wealth (Malanga, 2004). Malanga asserts that aggressive, government directed economic development by making a city creative will not work. As the revitalization efforts in Waterville go underway, the city will be able to see if a partnership between a wealthy private institution (Colby College) and the local government in Waterville will lead to successful economic growth in the long term.

David Greene seems to be going off a model where the College is pouring tens of millions of dollars into making the downtown beautiful, artsy, green and full of life in order to attract more young professionals to live and work in the town. But achieving this result may not be so simple. Most cities that are successful in re-designing their image, amenities and culture to attract the Creative Class are open to change and excited about the developments to attract new residents into their communities. Varying views among members of the Waterville community might get in the way of attracting a well-educated, creative workforce to the once-was-mill town.

The following section delves into the worldviews of Waterville Traditionalists, Waterville Professionals and Waterville College Students on their town and the revitalization efforts.

Worldview of Waterville Traditionalists

After interviewing a broad, mixed sample of over fifty Waterville residents, a worldview of Waterville Traditionalists became clear. During interviews, Traditionalists were asked about what they liked and disliked about Waterville, their attitudes towards the revitalization in their downtown and their desires of what should be done to the downtown during these efforts. A worldview of Traditionalists became apparent. The worldview involves Waterville, its downtown and the future of the city. Traditionalists frequently express their love of Waterville for what it is and what is there. Members of this group often reminisce on a vision of their city's glorious past compared to its current state. They demonstrate strong class consciousness and a desire to help poor and homeless members of their community. Many Traditionalists express skepticism of the future impact of the downtown revitalization efforts to really help and stimulate economic growth in Waterville. While some Traditionalists are skeptical of the efforts and Colby, many

desire a stronger relationship between Colby College and members of the Waterville community. Although they are skeptical of the effort's ability to revive their post-industrial city, they desire a clean, safe and aesthetically pleasing downtown.

Love of Waterville for What it is: Its people, its shops and its atmosphere

Waterville Traditionalists are very proud of their city. They express a great love and appreciation for their community, history and the city's assets. A community member who has lived in Waterville for over sixty years expresses the general sentiment for why Traditionalists stay in Waterville and care for it so deeply. "I like the history of Waterville, the location, the people. I've been here since I was in the seventh grade. I've seen a lot of changes for the town, some good, some for the worse. But I love my city." This man used to work in one of the local paper mills and has lived through the downfall of his city's economy, but remains positive because its history, people and its location.

There is something unique and special about Waterville's community according to the Traditionalists. A member of the community who has lived here for decades describes the uniqueness of the city, "it's hard to describe, I feel that there's a sense of community in Waterville that began to build about the time that Colby youngsters invented Railroad Square Cinema. It has grown to the point where there's the Maine International Film Festival. There's Waterville Creates. People are willing to join together to try something, whether or not it works. In many places, there's not much trying being done." The coming together to take risks and build up the city described above started in 1978 with the creation of Railroad Square Cinema, a three screen independent movie theater that is home to the yearly Maine International Film Festival.

Not every development is as successful as Railroad Square, but Waterville Traditionalists express that members of the community are invested in the city and work together to improve it.

Some long time residents describe the community as diverse. "I like the diversity here. It's become a melting pot to some degree. With a lot of different people moving in and out. It's changed a lot in the twenty years that I have been here." A local teen's favorite thing about Waterville is meeting new people across town.

"There's always an opportunity to meet someone new. Whether you go to the park, or pool, everywhere you go, there's always something going on. The Greater Taste of Waterville is probably my favorite thing. I love going downtown to all of the shops, having fun. The pool is definitely awesome." Colby is definitely awesome. I love going to the art museum. There's definitely interesting people to meet there."

Others describe it as peaceful. "It's a peaceful town, the crime rate is not all that high. I have the ability to walk everywhere and get everything I need on foot. There are fairly good people. There's always gonna be a rotten apple, but overall its good."

Waterville Traditionalists understand that their city is relatively small and appreciate all of the amenities that it has to offer, given its size. A Traditionalist says, "I like the variety of stores in a small area. The availability of services, especially because my wife and I are elderly." A local business owner relishes on the small town atmosphere and great assets nearby. "I like Waterville's small town atmosphere. There are many nice places to shop at. A lot are independently owned, entrepreneurial style shops. There's a lot going on education wise. There's Thomas, Colby, KVCC and Unity College nearby. Those things are all very attractive. There are

also really nice areas to walk." Traditionalists identify the key assets of Waterville as the colleges nearby, the variety of shops, its location as a central hub in Maine, great hospitals, its trail network and its community.

Many Traditionalists' favorite aspect of Waterville is its trails and access to outdoor recreation. There are many walking and biking trails scattered throughout Waterville and a teen describes them as "the bomb." A retired Waterville resident describes why she loves Waterville. "I love Maine and Central Maine, with the lakes and hills. It is very similar to where I grew up in Upstate New York. The main reason why I came to Waterville was to work at Colby College... I had been living in large cities for a long time and I wanted to return to a rural area. I stayed for retirement. It's my home, I have been here for forty years and it's a very pleasant community." This retired Colby College librarian came to escape urban life and stayed because of its lakes, hills and community. She continues, "There is no point in trying to make Waterville into New York or Boston. You live here because of the reasons that you live here and then you have to travel to get some things and I think Waterville does very well for a small community."

Vision of Waterville's Glorious Past

Waterville was once a booming middle class industrial town where jobs were plentiful and civic life was thriving. Waterville Traditionalists often reminisce on their vision of Waterville's glorious past and compare it to their city's current state of economic decay. There is a sense of pride when they talk about Waterville's past, but sadness and hopelessness when they look at the present and future state of the city's economy. A young man in his late thirties has lived in Waterville his whole life and does contract construction and manual labor work with

friends and family across the state to make a living. He has put a lot of critical thought into Waterville's glorious past and does not know if Waterville will ever achieve what it once had.

This young, working class Traditionalist discusses how a once thriving working class neighborhood has changed in the past seventy years. "There's a lot of urban decay in areas that used to be decent residential areas like the South End. It used to be where middle class working people lived that worked at Scott Paper or the Hathaway Shirt Factory. The railroad used to be bigger here. Nowadays, there seems to be a lot of waste when it comes to public spending utility and maintenance wise. Mismanagement of funds here is a big issue... There's no industry anymore, there's no production. It is all consumer based." The South End is very representative of the past and present of Waterville. This man described it as a decent residential area filled with employed mill workers. It is now the one of the poorest neighborhoods in Waterville with crime and decay. He describes the consumer economy in Waterville today: "You work at Walmart so you can earn money to go out to Applebee's and people work at Applebee's to go buy their groceries and everything at Walmart. You know, it's a sustained economy that is not growing at all." Waterville has a struggling service economy where fifty-four percent of households have a yearly income of less than \$40,000 (2015 ACS). The only institutions in the area employing a large number of people and bringing in outside wealth is Colby College and the hospitals.

"The only thing that keeps this place running is during the Fall, Winter and Spring is that all the Colby kids are here. It's summer now and there's no one in this coffee shop because the Colby kids are gone. It shows that there's really no money locally. So it goes back to that there's no jobs here. It's like a revolving circle where once the older people with money die and those with

the money aren't here to buy new cars and spend any money. Colby and Thomas really are the biggest draws for this region."

The young Traditionalist expresses the importance of a new production economy in Waterville:

"This whole town was built around production. You go back to the 1800's, things have just changed so much. We don't log wood anymore. We don't make anything here any more. It used to be a pretty wealthy town, but when the income gap increases, people can't make money. Waterville needs one good production facility that's unique and has a niche market. What that is, I have no idea."

Waterville's prosperous past was centered around its textile production, shirt manufacturing and strong entrepreneurship of residents. Waterville Traditionalists recognize that the sources of their city's past wealth are gone and that they must identify a new niche market to produce for in order to truly revitalize their economy and community.

Class Consciousness: Desire to help poor and homeless Waterville residents

Waterville Traditionalists have a very strong sense of class consciousness and prioritize revitalization and investment in their community that helps poor and homeless Waterville residents, offers shops that remain accessible to low income people and brings jobs for less educated workers. Traditionalists understand that Colby and wealthier residents in Waterville want to bring in higher quality shops, restaurants, arts and cultural activities with the revitalization efforts, but recognize that these new amenities will be unaffordable for themselves and many others in the greater Waterville area.

These Waterville residents express that if any development efforts and investments are to help Waterville and its community, they must first help the large homeless and poor population in their city. After being asked what she would like done during the revitalization efforts, a long-time Waterville resident says, "I wish Waterville would do more for the homeless. We have so many homeless people. We don't take good enough care of them. Even myself, I just sit back and do nothing about it. I think that something needs to be done about it. I think that the town's people, the surrounding communities should do more for the homeless."

A young man worries about the safety of his younger sister because of the homeless population with mental illnesses and drug addicts who occupy public spaces like parks and areas in the downtown:

"I worry about the overly large amount of homeless people and drug addicts. I need Colby College to take over downtown now. Down by the Two Cent Bridge is homeless population central and most of them are drug addicts or 'freakin pedophiles and I have a twelve-year-old little sister that I won't let walk across the street to go get a cookie from the coffee shop because I don't want a freaking pedophile to bother her."

The Mid Maine Homeless Shelter offers food, beds and clothing for people in need, but the shelter is full and it is hard to get off of the waiting list to get a bed. During the day, the shelter requires all residents to leave the building. Some people work, others find places to hang out and kill time until the evening when they are allowed back into the shelter. This causes many homeless people to hang out in the downtown and surrounding areas. The same young man says that the city really needs to

"clean up the disaster down by the river, if you go down by the river there's like frickin used condoms, empty beer bottles and couches all over the place. All of the homeless kids and dooper

kids hang down there and the majority of them are 14, 16, 19 and they're just homeless kids living down there and they have camps and there's garbage everywhere. It's a disaster."

The occupation of space at the Head of Falls park next to the Kennebec River by homeless people is representative of the large homeless population in the area and drug epidemic in Waterville and Maine. Without stable jobs to provide for themselves and without enough beds at the local shelter, these transient people must fend for themselves and hang out/live in public areas.

Waterville Traditionalists value a downtown that had shops and spaces that are affordable for everyone including shoppers, those who want to start their own business and artists. A quilt artist and retired Colby Librarian is critical of expensive, high-quality shops opening in the downtown.

"Barrels Community Market (an expensive small market with local products and produce) is a nice idea but it's a hippy dippy idea. It doesn't work in Waterville. If I'm gonna go buy food for my family, I am not going to buy it there. It's too expensive. It just doesn't work. I am sorry. the Farmer's Market does work though which has become a phenomenon everywhere, not just in Waterville." Traditionalists recognize why some people want shops that are local like Barrels, but merely cannot afford to visit these shops.

A Waterville Traditionalist from a Middle Class household acknowledges that places she would like to have in Waterville are unaffordable for the majority of people in the community: *"We're not a big city. For us personally I'd love to see more restaurants, things to do, things for our kids to do. A lot of our population is socioeconomically unable to enjoy some of those things so I think that's kind of where it struggles. For those luxuries to exist, you have to have people who can afford them, which isn't affordable for everyone."*

This woman recognizes that luxuries she enjoys and can afford are not realistic in a town like Waterville. She believes that many of these shops and amenities cannot survive here, and if they open, the majority of people in Waterville will not be able to take advantage of them.

Waterville Traditionalists appreciate the arts and cultural activities; many cannot afford to enjoy purchasing them or paying for programming. The quilter cited earlier loves the arts and takes advantage of the Colby Museum of Art and any free or cheap activities in the area but typically cannot afford these events.

“One of the biggest problems for me and many others in this area is that many of these things involving the arts have gotten so expensive. Even if these events come to town, I can't afford to go to them so it is irrelevant really for myself and most. You can get pretty much anything you need these days by looking online for programs on television if you're particularly interested in an art form.”

This artist, who is a Waterville Traditionalist shows that Traditionalists do in fact enjoy arts and culture, but do not have the expendable income to keep places that support them in business.

She also describes that Waterville is not an affordable place for artists to reside because members of the community cannot afford their products and they cannot afford full time shops and studio spaces. She says that shared innovation spaces and temporary markets and venues could be a solution to attracting artists like herself to be in the downtown.

“There need to be accessible and cheap places where there are spaces for innovation for pop up events. If I want to sell some of my quilts for a day, maybe I could go there for a small fee or percentage of my sales. The problem that individual people like me is that income doesn't flow in on a regular basis. If you could have spaces with more flexibility and occasional public access, I think for arts and crafts venues could make it work in Waterville. If I want to sell some of my

quilts for a day, maybe I could go there for a small fee or percentage of my sales. The problem that individual people like me is that income doesn't flow in on a regular basis. If you could have spaces with more flexibility and occasional public access, I think for arts and crafts venues could make it work in Waterville."

If arts and culture are a desired aspect of the revitalized downtown, this local artist makes it clear that the city and downtown partners should make it affordable for artists and entrepreneurs to invest their time and energy in Waterville.

Skepticism of the Future Impact of Revitalization Efforts

While many people have extremely positive and hopeful attitudes regarding the revitalization efforts carried out by Colby College, downtown partners and outside investors, some Waterville Traditionalists are skeptical about the investment in their downtown. All Traditionalists hope that the revitalization downtown is successful, but some do not think that they will do much to revitalize the economy in Waterville as a whole, others are worried about the dormitory that Colby College is building on Main Street, many Traditionalists direct their concern towards future availability of parking in the downtown, and a few Traditionalists express concern of Colby's true motives behind the millions of dollars and resource they are putting into the whole project.

Some Traditionalists believe that the revitalization efforts will help out the downtown, but will do very little for Waterville's overall economy. One describes their attitudes towards the whole project as mixed. "I have mixed feelings about the development efforts, I like that they are going to replace or revamp buildings to get more shops and businesses into them. That's great, but it won't revitalize Waterville." While another thinks that the efforts are bad. "The

revitalization efforts aren't going to do anything. I mean all it's really going to do is make it look nice for a while. Colby kinda gets to do whatever they want because they're the money around here. It's just the way it is. You know it's just life. I don't think it's a bad idea.” The subgroup of the Traditionalists views the investment in the downtown as a façade of fake growth. A few shops and businesses will benefit from the project, but the declining economy of Waterville will remain the same overall.

Other Waterville Traditionalists are concerned about the results of Colby’s building of a dormitory on top of ninety parking spaces in the Concourse lot on Main Street. The root of their worries lies behind the addition of two hundred people and their vehicles to the downtown, while removing ninety parking spots. One Traditionalist thinks the idea of the dormitory downtown is good, but thinks that parking will be a large problem

"I am trying to figure out what Colby and the city are going to do about the number of cars that are going to be generated by a dormitory, office building complex and hotel down here. That is going to take up a chunk of space and bring in many more cars. I think they'll have to put a garage of some kind in. I don't know any other way they can reasonably do it."

Another person does not understand why the College had to build on that property and is skeptical of their motives behind building this dorm.

“I don't know how I feel about the dorm building that's going to be put up there. Everybody thinks it's going to be great, but you can't really tell and why are they doing it down town, there's lots of other places that they coulda done it. Why did they chose downtown Waterville... is it going to be an experiment or something? I also have doubts about it because they took a big

chunk of the parking spaces from the Concourse. Where are the people who normally go down there going to park? There going to be 200 students there and those students all have to have cars or where are they gonna park?"

A few Traditionalists direct their skepticism and negative feelings about the revitalization project towards Colby College and the financial power they have in the city.

"I don't like Colby's influx of mega bucks into the downtown area. They're buying people, not the environment or businesses. They're just paying off people. That's the way it looks to me. Buying the property on the Concourse to build the dormitory. I think that was an illegal purchase. When that was bought back in the 60s from the urban renewal project, it was bought with federal money. I don't think the federal government has signed off for Waterville to sell it somebody or Colby College. I think it is an illegal sale and it may be brought up someday."

While a number of Traditionalists are skeptical of Colby's dormitory and their real intention to carry out their investments on Main Street, Traditionalists tend to view it as a great opportunity to better the relationship between the Colby College community and the greater Waterville community. A director of the Waterville Public Library interacts with Colby students frequently, loves the students and wishes the two communities could interact more. "You guys get a bum rap, and everyone I know who has had any close interaction with students. They're like that student is great and I'm like yeah, they're great. I hope that the library is one way that we can bridge these two groups together." Another Traditionalists views the colleges and their communities as a great asset. "It's nice that there's two colleges in town: Colby and Thomas College. It makes the community a little more nice, I think than without it. Certainly without

those two schools, Waterville would just be a small, normal town. The two schools make it a special place to be.”

A Traditionalist who expressed his belief that Colby is abusing their financial power in the downtown still wishes that the relationship between Colby and community improves. Traditionalists have seen times when the relationship between Colby and Waterville was strong and believe that it is possible to have a closer connection.

"I don't want to shit on Colby. Colby before they were even on the hill they were downtown. They're a part of Waterville, like it or not. If you go anywhere with a Colby sticker on your vehicle, people will recognize it and want to know how you're connected. I did some work in New York City years ago and I had a sticker on my truck and a woman came up to me and asked if I was from Waterville. You connect everywhere. I would like to see Colby better integrated into Waterville, but I am dead set against the dormitory. I think they ought to concentrate on existing decrepit buildings in the downtown, not build new ones."

Many Traditionalists are not skeptical of Colby College in these efforts and are very thankful and excited about their investment into the downtown area. One longtime Waterville resident describes his appreciation for the partnership and President David Greene's work:

"I really am happy about the Waterville downtown revitalization effort. If you'd have asked me before Colby got involved in it, I would say get Colby involved in it in some way. Colby when it went up on the hill sort of left Waterville behind. Not that they didn't do anything to help out with the downtown, but they made little effort to do much. But David Greene seems like a go getter and I'm really happy about all of this."

Desire for a Clean, Safe and Aesthetically Pleasing Downtown

Traditionalists identify and desire a very obtainable goal through the revitalization efforts: a clean, safe and aesthetically pleasing downtown. A city's downtown represents the overall state of its community and economy and many people see investment in their downtown as a way to clean up decrepit and trashy aspects of Main Street. The first place that Traditionalists point to when they think about cleaning an area up in the downtown is the Concourse. During interviews, various Traditionalists discuss their experiences with the Concourse:

"I feel like where Save a Lot is in the Concourse is dumpy, I feel bad because there's a lot of lowly people there and it looks dumpy and I don't know if people can pick up trash more and make it cleaner... I don't know. The litter there is bad."

"I went to Dollar Tree the other day and there were some people standing outside clearly on drugs. they were scratching their skin, very jittery. you could tell they were on drugs and I was like... you know what, I'll just come back later. I don't really want to be there right now. I think that whole stretch where Dollar Tree and Goodwill are is the sketchy place. Other than that, everything is fine."

The Concourse is a reflection of the large homeless population in Waterville described earlier. Many homeless people hang out there because it is shaded and it has developed into its own social scene with homeless and poor members of the community.

A majority of Waterville Traditionalists would love to see many of the once-beautiful buildings and store fronts get re-faced. Since the decline of Waterville's economy, businesses

and landlords have not had the financial resources to take care of their buildings. This is often because their buildings are not occupied, or because the rent they charge is too low to cover extra expenses. Traditionalists see the investment in the downtown as a perfect time to beautiful their central commerce space.

“Well, I think all of the buildings are a bit run down... the Levine's building and some of the other buildings on the other end need to be revitalized and re-faced. A new facing on the actual buildings would make them not look so dumpy and run down.”

Some would like the downtown to be an experience with parks and green spaces developed.

"I would like to see a paved pedestrian area with green space by Silver Street where people go and shop, buy coffee at Jorgenson's or something at Downtown Smoothie and sit, spend some time downtown, which is what we want. People can come and linger and stay down here. There aren't a lot of spaces in the downtown where people feel comfortable hanging out and eating ice cream or lunch. A space like that would be wonderful.” They continue: *"There's a lot of potential at the Head of Falls area. Some sort of community area would be lovely. One of the suggestions that came up at one of the meetings that I went to was some sort of botanical garden by the water along the walkway. I would love to see the sculpture from the parking lot moved to that park instead."*

Lastly, many Traditionalists would like to see a change of Main Street's traffic pattern to have a safer and pedestrian-friendly downtown. Main Street is currently one way with a speed limit of thirty miles per hour. There is diagonal on-street-parking that often takes up a lot of the

street's space and results in blind spots for those backing out of the diagonal spots. Waterville residents frequently discuss that they feel unsafe using these spots and wish that they were removed. *"I would like to see the downtown as a pedestrian friendly place with less vehicle accidents, pedestrians can cross safely, it is well lit and parents feel ok about sending their kids to walk six blocks on their own."* Many Traditionalists would love to see two-way traffic, parallel parking, and slow speed limits to improve safety and pedestrian use.

Waterville Professionals

In this section I am describing the worldview of Waterville Professionals.

Classy and high quality

Waterville Professionals frequently mention a vision for a classy downtown with high quality shops, restaurants and amenities. This vision is very different from the current downtown and represents a very class-centered lens on what a downtown should have and look like.

Waterville Professionals view the downtown as if it is below their tastes and standards and frequently mentioned desired for "real" amenities and top quality goods that the professional class can afford. While most of Waterville's population is poor to lower-middle class, most of these professionals failed to discuss topics of accessibility and affordability for these luxurious shopping and dining options.

The Concourse is a large parking lot and shopping strip in the downtown with spots for a few hundred cars and low-cost retail options. Some of the shopping options in the Concourse include Goodwill, Dollar Tree, Save-a-Lot and Chapter 11 Furniture, all of which offer cheap or discounted goods for the low income Waterville residents. Because the Concourse's shops cater

to the poorer Waterville residents, the space frequently is occupied by transient folk, poor people waiting on taxis and employees who hang out, smoke cigarettes and talk loudly with each other. The shops at the Concourse have a large roof over the entrance, providing a shaded area in the summer that homeless people use to keep cool and survive hot days when they are not allowed to stay at the homeless shelter. The Concourse for these members of the Waterville community is a place of survival and social life. Poor and low income members of the Waterville community rely on the Concourse to provide them with cheap home goods, clothing, furniture, entertainment as well as a place of refuge to hang out in the shade during hot summer days.

Waterville Professionals rarely interact and shop in these spaces and have a very different perspective on its purpose and appearance. One professor at Colby College says:

“Class up the Concourse. I know we need to have low income stores, but that whole strip could be nicer and cleaner. Perhaps have a stationed security officer in something like a welcome/visitor station having a presence to stop delinquency around those stores.”

This member for the Waterville Professional class brings up multiple critiques of the Concourse regarding its cleanliness, quality of appearance and safety. Although members of the Waterville Professionals rarely shop at these stores, the presence of a non-aesthetically pleasing lower-end shopping strip bothers them. The City of Waterville requires its residents to purchase purple trash bags costing two dollars each in order for the city to pick up their garbage. This costly garbage removal service can become a large financial burden on people who can barely afford to put food on their tables so some Waterville residents dump their garbage in trash bins scattered across the city. In the past, there were many garbage cans in the downtown and in the Concourse, but people began to dump large quantities of trash in these bins, prompting the City to remove of

the public bins. Since the removal of the bins, loose trash and cigarettes are scattered on the ground outside of the Concourse shops because there is no where to dispose of trash nearby. Members of the Waterville Professionals comment about the trash in the Concourse describing it as a deterrence to shopping there. The financial burden for low income folk to dispose of their trash becomes a burden for the Waterville Professional's shopping experience. The occupation of the Concourse space by low income and transient folk makes this professor feel unsafe and desire a security guard or welcome center.

Many Waterville Professionals desire "real" additions to the downtown implying that what is currently available is not up to their standards. A Member of the professionals mentions desired change to a small park in the downtown. When asked about what they would want to happen to the downtown to make them visit more often, they said "Make Castonguay Square the REAL center of town with more cafes, an upscale wine bar or something like that, etc." This request implies that the center of the downtown is not adequate and that what is present in Castonguay square is not to their standards. Currently, Castonguay square is a green space surrounded by an arts center, a jewelry store, an upscale bar and restaurant, the Waterville Opera House and a community center. Castonguay Square is the only green space in the downtown area so this response shows a desire for the downtown scene to revolve around green spaces. Another member of the Waterville Professionals says that they want "a real bookstore and a restaurant that was actually good." This is another instance where a member of this elite Waterville class implies that what is present is fake and not good enough for the city. The current bookstore in the downtown is a used bookstore, it is possible that this respondent desires a new bookstore. The second half of this respondent's statement portrays all restaurants in the Waterville downtown as bad.

In the past, there was a Hannaford grocery store in the downtown. This store has closed down and the only grocer in the downtown is “Save-a-lot,” a discount grocer that sells mostly packaged goods and no produce. A large number of Waterville Professionals who responded to the survey desired a higher quality super market. One person requested a “Grocery store like Hannaford, Shaw's, Trader Joe's or a natural/local food store like Barrel's and Uncle Dean's.” Trader Joe's in particular was brought up many times. Another person discussed the ethics of the super market in detail. “I would like a Trader Joe's. Specifically. As a company they tend to provide a living wage and favorable conditions for employees; and the specialty health, and snack food items they sell at relatively low prices are very attractive for faculty, young professionals, and students in the area.” This person's desire for a high quality grocery store includes the requirement for ethical business practices and a living wage. The mention of a super market that provides living wages for their employees shows consciousness of employees of companies in Waterville who do not make a living wage.

The Waterville Professionals' desire for a downtown with classy and high quality goods is not only in reference to the quality of shops present, but the type of goods offered in the shops. Desire for luxury food and beverage products was frequently mentioned in surveys. A respondent desires “more good stores: wine and cheese, books and magazines, etc.” These goods are high quality foods and drinks, cultural products and intellectual goods. High quality consumables and intellectual goods are not currently the focus of the downtown and the desire for these goods shows that some Waterville Professionals want something out of the downtown that is not presently available. The absence of these goods in the past could be representative of a lack of market, but with a vision of a revitalized downtown, perhaps some professionals hope that the downtown will serve a different social class within Waterville. Another Waterville

Professional wants high quality clothing stores and removal of discount shops. They ask for a “women's clothing store comparable to Earthbound; more shops like Paragon, fewer like Dollar Store, Goodwill.” This is another example of some Waterville Professionals’ desire for a large change in the type of store offering available in this central marketplace.

Family Friendly

A second worldview that made up the Waterville Professionals’ vision of their downtown is family friendliness. Many members of the professional class frequently mention the lack of options and activities for children and families downtown and prioritize activities and a family culture over anything else. Fifty percent of households in Waterville are made up of families with an average family size of three people (ACS, 2016). Winter months are tough for families because children must play inside and after school programs such as the South End Teen Center and the Alford Youth Center close between five and six o’clock. In the past, many parents brought their children to the Inside Out Playground on Main Street, but the play space closed down due to lack of funding. Without shops catered to children, places to play in the winter, green space and a children and family friendly atmosphere, the downtown is infrequently visited by the Waterville Professionals’ families.

Many Waterville Professionals frequently said that they spend little time and money in Downtown Waterville because of the lack of recreation options, lack of fun shops for children and the large number of bars there. One professor says, “Have the downtown be more family friendly rather than lots of bars is a great way for long term revitalization, as families spend time and money in places. Also an active link with the river and outdoor recreation will be a big draw.” This person points out that the presence of bars turns them off from spending time and

money downtown. Other members of the Waterville Professionals continue by describing their desire for fun things to do with their family as well as healthy and educational opportunities for their children. One says that they would like “more café spots, a space for teens to hang out like getting a bowling alley, a diner, a space for tutoring students, like an after school center, a playground or small park downtown, fitness classes, more shopping (clothes), a crepe place, music store, candy shop, cooking class space? A space to help teen parents?” This survey response points to a family oriented value of education, recreation and cultural activities.

The Downtown as an Experience

Members of the Waterville Professionals often did not mention desire for new or different shopping options, they value the downtown as an experience. In order to go there to spend money, they value a place that is enjoyable to hang out at. Green spaces, pretty buildings, plants, traffic flow, decorations and more are very important characteristics of a thriving downtown. One Waterville Professional would like the town to “change the flow of traffic so it is a more pleasant experience to walk on Main Street.” Waterville Professionals enjoy the experience of walking in a downtown rather than a culture of parking, shopping and leaving. More Waterville Professionals point to this by desiring parks to hang out at and less parking options in the center of the downtown area. A respondent wrote in their survey, “develop a nice park or central meeting space (instead of the atrocious parking lot).” Another says “add a park space and shift parking to perimeters to encourage pedestrianism.” Pedestrianism is a key aspect to the downtown as an experience for this group.

“Open it up as a walking city. Make Main St. two ways (it's the height of absurdity that the main avenue through downtown Waterville is designed to tell all traffic coming in one of two

directions to essentially piss off with a 'do not enter sign'). Replace the Concourse--a concrete disaster--with walkways, gardens, a park, a playground, an outdoor art installation, or anything that serves a community as a community. Build a parking garage outside of the main downtown area, but within walking distance of downtown; and employ (I used the word deliberately) a shuttle that can take elderly and physically limited members of the community between the parking structure and the downtown shops and restaurants. Open up the sidewalks so local restaurants and cafes can put tables outside in the warmer months and accommodate more pedestrian traffic when it's snowy. In short, get the cars and car-ways out of downtown Waterville and make it place where both locals and tourists can walk around, browse shops, and stop for coffee or lunch without having to navigate an unnecessary amount of car traffic for a town of 15,000 people."

The downtown as an experience extends past a culture of walking to a judgment of the aesthetics of places that Waterville Professionals want to spend time at. One Waterville Professional says to "Make a requisite sign program for all businesses to be of a certain size, style, palette so that there is a consistency and aesthetic sensibility when looking at downtown." Downtown Waterville currently serves a very functional purpose and for most shops, aesthetics and beauty of the exterior of their buildings is not a top priority because most businesses do not have the extra money to beautify their signs. Prioritizing aesthetic sensibility through implementation of a sign requisite program puts aesthetics over functionality, a key component to viewing and using the downtown as an experience. Another professional wants "Better restaurants, more cultivated green space with seating, a working water fountain in Castonguay Square; clear walking paths along the river; unique shops." This member of the Waterville Professionals demonstrates the necessity for high quality dining, green space, aesthetically

pleasing decorations, pedestrian friendly paths and unique shops to have a downtown that is an experience to visit and shop at.

Many professionals prioritize Downtown Waterville's future to have a local focus. The Waterville Professionals believe that museums, shops, restaurants and décor should revolve around Maine's industries and history to make it unique, interesting and in support of local business. One says "My #1 desire for downtown would be to establish a center for local history right on Main Street that would serve as a gathering place for Colby and Waterville communities. Local history centers have shown that celebrating culture and heritage in a community fosters civic pride, collaboration and economic resurgence." Waterville Professionals, especially Colby College Faculty, identify a lack of a strong connection between Colby and Waterville communities. By celebrating local history in the form of a museum as a gathering space, the professionals think that the downtown could be an experience and space that unifies the entire community. Although Waterville Professionals have not been in Waterville their entire lives, this response shows a desire to fit in and really connect with their city and community

Some other Waterville Professionals view selling local goods and foods as something exciting and to be desired. Two Colby College professors desire "a restaurant with locally-sourced, healthy food with local beer, etc. that is open for lunch and dinner - maybe even breakfast!" and "a healthy and local option for eating lunch. A cafe that is comfortable to sit in with really good coffee. A local market. An outdoor beer garden that serves local food and beer." Healthy and local food and beer is of great importance to a thriving downtown for these members of the Waterville community.

Waterville Professionals Know What is Best

A portion of the Waterville Professionals believe that they know what is best for Waterville, its downtown, the community and economy. These members of this social group believe that they are superior to the Waterville Traditionalists and express this through the businesses they want in the downtown and how they want the “field” to operate in the downtown. One Waterville Professional expresses exactly how they want the physical space of the downtown to be:

“This will seem oddly specific because I've spent a lot of time thinking about it, but two things would dramatically improve the downtown experience in Waterville. One, as I've mentioned, would be getting Trader Joe's or a comparably priced and employee-friendly specialty food store. Downtown Waterville should have better options for produce and specialty foods than Save-a-Lot and the Dollar Store (which is why people get in their cars to drive to Shaw's, Hannaford, etc. to pay entirely too much for groceries). Whole Foods, by the way, is probably too expensive to meet the broader needs of the Waterville area, but Trader Joe's is affordable enough to appeal to everyone and specialty enough to appeal to high-earning Colby faculty and staff and a student body with considerable sources of disposable income.”

This faculty member thinks that Trader Joe's would be best for Waterville; however, they do not acknowledge that the majority of the city's population cannot afford to shop at a luxury food store like this.

Another Colby faculty member describes the current state of the downtown negatively and highlights their belief that Colby knows what is best for Waterville and that the Waterville

Professionals are better than the Traditionalists. This professional states that in the downtown, they would like:

“People who I actually want to talk to and associate with. There isn't much intellectual life there, even with the people who are supposed to be the leaders and artists.”

This member of the Waterville Professionals does not want to associate those who are not professionals and intellectuals. They imply that anyone who is not a part of the professional and elite institutions of the Waterville area are not legitimate leaders and artists. They continue stating that:

“Waterville is a Philistine wasteland desperately trying to become bourgeois, a bizarro-world where bar owners, insurance agents, and used car salesmen call the shots and think they are on par with David Greene on building Waterville's future. No wonder it's such a hell hole.”

This comment outlines the Waterville Professionals’ appreciation for the arts and culture and their belief that Waterville greatly lacks both. This Colby College professor denies membership of business owners, insurance agents and salesmen into the Waterville Professional social group and shines light to a hierarchy within the Waterville Professionals where Colby College is at the top. David Greene, Colby College’s president, knows what is best for Waterville’s future according to the Waterville Professionals. This person continues outlining their belief that Colby College is at the top of the professional hierarchy and that they are the savior to a decaying Waterville:

Here are two things I would want downtown: Colby faculty who live there could get more involved in local politics and decision making so Waterville stops shooting itself in the foot with

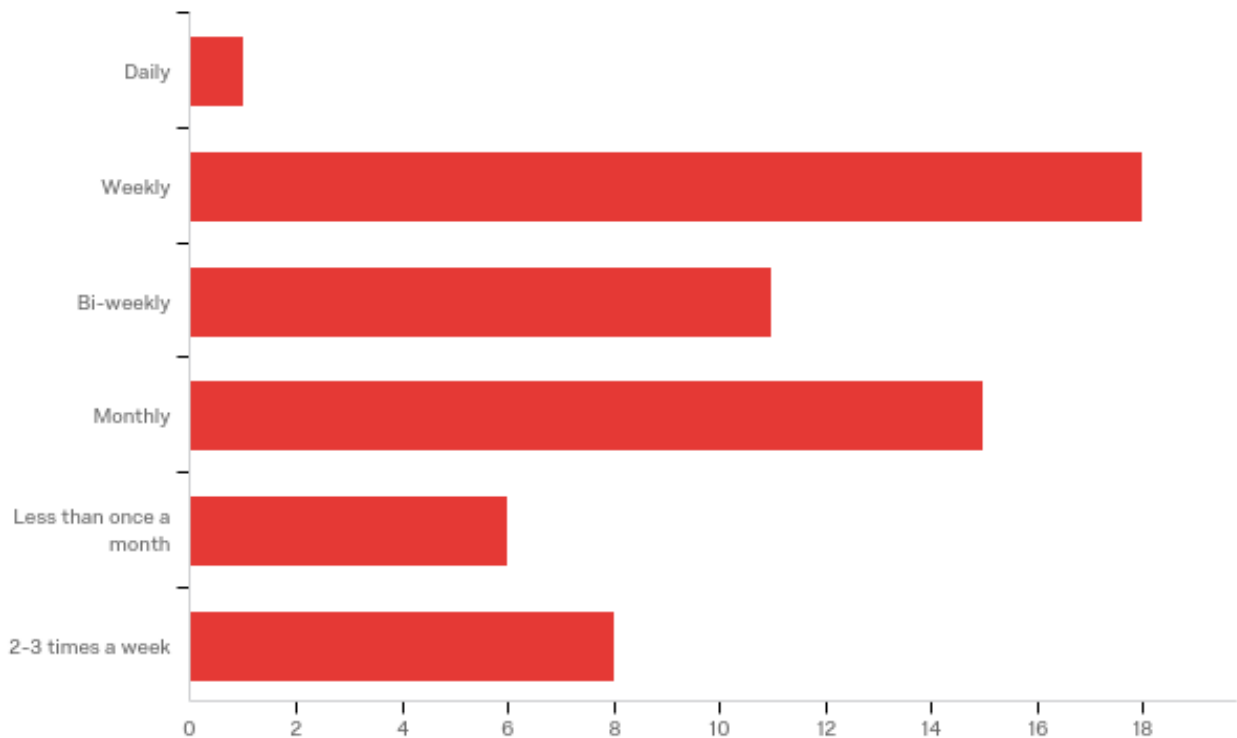
dumb ideas, and Colby could do more programming and events downtown to make it less soulless and artless and terrible. Frankly, I can't get out of Waterville fast enough when I have to be there."

As a whole, Waterville Professionals want classy and high quality shops and restaurants and they would like the downtown to be an experience with green spaces, pretty buildings, plants, slow traffic flow, decorations and cultural activities.

Worldview of Colby College Students

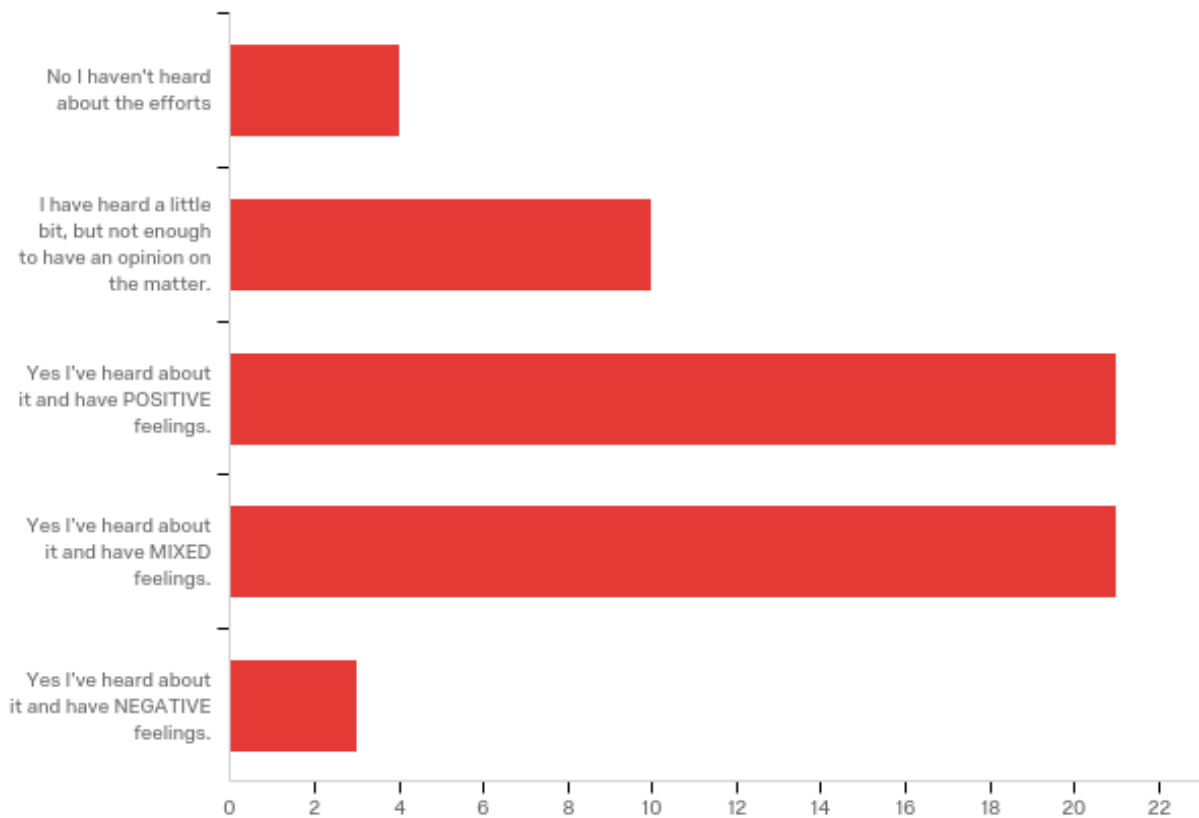
I do not have the same data as above for students because of the nature of the data collection. Instead, I have compiled quantitative data based on responses that students had to questions on an online Qualtrics survey that was sent to Colby College students who were on campus over summer 2016. These quantitative measures along with a few interviews with students, help to get a sense of the worldview of Colby College students regarding the development in the downtown. I also was able to interview some Colby students to get an in-depth sense of what they knew and thought about the revitalization. As a whole, students do not know a lot about the revitalization efforts off of the hill. They have heard a little bit and have some basic opinions on what is going on, but they do not have strong views. Students do not spend a lot of time in the downtown so they are not as invested in what is going on as Waterville citizens. Students have varying attitudes about the efforts, but they are to be formed as the project progresses and as they consume more news on what is going on. There are no students protesting the development, and no students extremely in favor of them either. On the student end of things, it is very passive and something that they are not really a part of.

How Often Do Students Visit the Downtown?



Less than half of the students surveyed visit the downtown at least once a week. 13% visit two-three times a week, and only one percent visit the downtown daily. Because students are not visiting the downtown that often, perhaps they are not very invested in the planning stages of the revitalization efforts downtown. For Waterville Traditionalists and Professionals, the downtown is a key part of their experience in Waterville. It is the center of commerce in their city so any major changes that happen there are political matters. For students, the revitalization efforts are background noise because they do not visit the downtown much. The lack of time spent in the downtown can be seen through consumptions of news regarding the developments on Main Street.

Have you heard about revitalization efforts taking place in Waterville's downtown?



The majority of students (seventy-six percent) have heard about the revitalization efforts. Twenty-four percent have heard nothing or too little to have an opinion on the efforts. Most students have positive feelings about the efforts, but worry that it will hurt those who live in the downtown or not be beneficial for low income folks. Below is a spread of students' attitudes toward the revitalization efforts:

Variation in what students have heard

"I've heard only brief comments from Pres. Greene"

“I have heard that people have been trying to make it happen, but it hasn't been that successful and people aren't anticipating much change.”

“I've heard that the revitalization efforts taking place in Waterville will greatly impact Waterville's economy and will hopefully improve Colby's relationship with the Waterville community.”

“I've heard great things like it will bring more jobs to the community and further integrate Colby into Waterville life”

Some students think that the revitalization efforts are good, but wonder how much good they will really do for all populations in the city.

“I think it will ultimately be beneficial to everyone involved.”

“I like the idea but am worried that it won't be helpful or enjoyable for the people in the Waterville community.”

“I think the efforts are good. I just don't know whether actual actions help most people or just a few.”

Here are four students who are very worried that the College is gentrifying the downtown Waterville community.

“Please for the love of all, don't make it harder for the people who already live there.”

“I have heard a great deal about the revitalization efforts. While I am all for creating new jobs for Waterville citizens, I fear the focus and implementation is too Colby-centric and could lead to gentrification, pushing the real citizens of Waterville out of their own home.”

“Would love a nicer downtown but "nicer" = gentrification = major concerns about the classism in this project/rhetoric surrounding it.”

“I think the plans to bring in more business to the area are very well thought out, my only concern would be whether the new jobs created will actually lift impoverished neighborhoods or just force them out to make way for upper middle class developments.”

Some students are excited about the future of Downtown Waterville, but worry that increased numbers of Colby students in the downtown will be bad for the Colby-Waterville relationship.

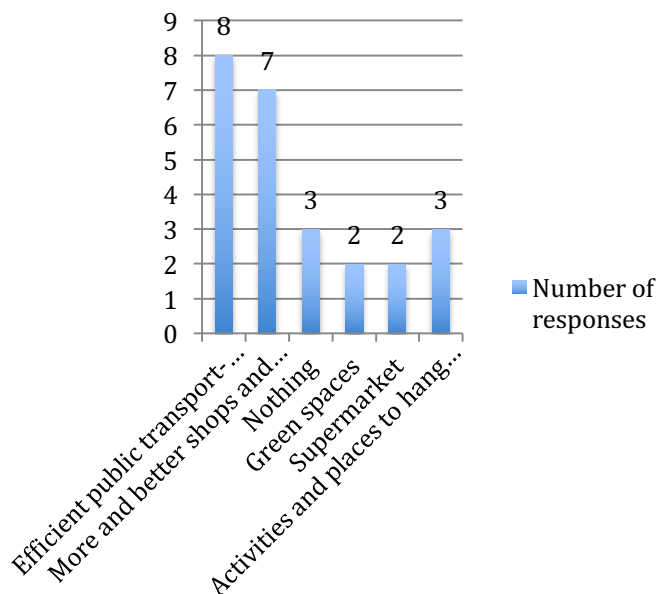
“I think it could be good for the community but worry about how the community feels about Colby students spending more time in Waterville.”

“It sounds great, but I'm worried off-campus dorms will be loud and disruptive to the surrounding community and strain relationships further.”

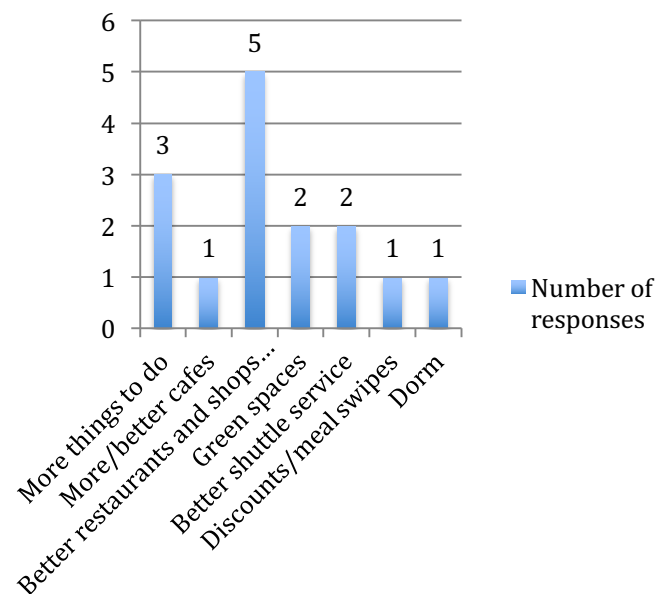
“I am very excited because I do think that Colby is very separated from Waterville, however I have heard a lot of negative feedback from Waterville residents about the new buildings taking over valuable parking space (and the zone of the Farmer's Market).”

The responses on student attitudes about the downtown revitalization efforts show a clear worry that the investment on Main Street will gentrify this part of Waterville. Most students will enjoy the benefits of a “nicer” downtown, but they recognize that those with class privilege are the ones who will be able to afford the nicer, more expensive amenities. There is the overall view that the students want Waterville’s economy to be uplifted, but that these efforts will not be enough to help everyone out.

What would make you go downtown more often? (Students without cars)



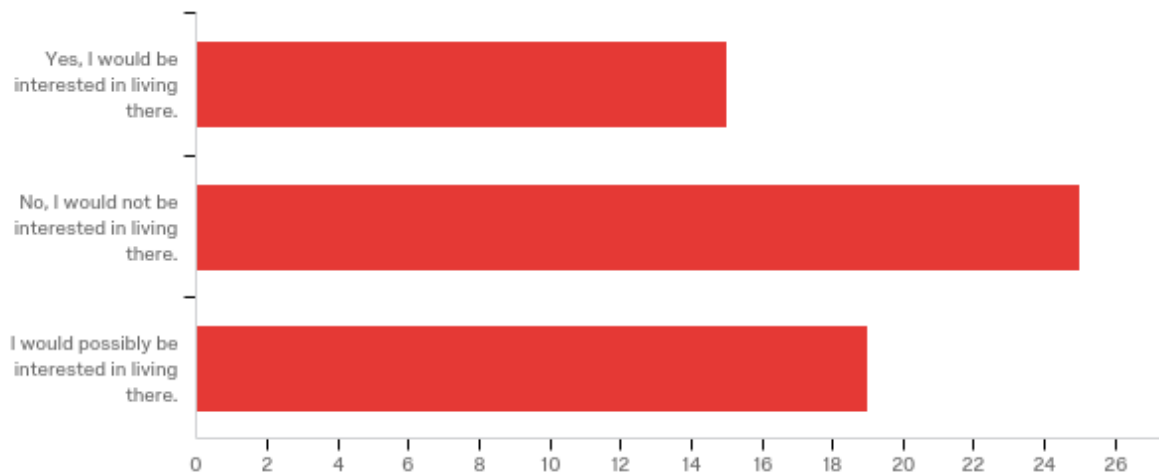
What would make you go downtown more often? (Students with cars)



Thirty-one percent of students who responded to my survey would visit the downtown more often if there was improved transportation to and from Main Street. Twenty-five percent of student respondents said that if they could do anything to the downtown, they would clean it up

and make it more aesthetically pleasing. Twenty-five percent of respondents would like a better variety of shops and restaurants, particularly shops that cater to college students. Eleven percent of students would like to see more activities that do not center around alcohol in the downtown. Other desires that came up in student responses were improving the relationship between Colby students and the Waterville community, more green space and spaces and initiatives that promote community inclusion.

Would you live in Colby's downtown dormitory?



Students do not show strong interest in living in the downtown right now. Although the efforts truly stem from Colby College's desire to have students live in the downtown and spend more time there, the majority of student have no interest in the dormitory. I spoke with Brian Clark, Colby's Vice President of Planning, about the lack of interest in the dormitory and he said that students cannot envision what the dorm and downtown will be like in a few years. He said he would never want to live in the downtown with the state its in now, but a few years down the road the downtown dorm will be one of the most appealing housing options.

Vanya is a senior at Colby College from Pakistan who has majors in Women's and Gender Studies and Government. Her interview reveals something very important to the worldview of Colby students that was mentioned earlier. She is very worried about gentrification resulting from the revitalization efforts in Downtown Waterville.

"I'm worried of gentrification and the implications that the revitalization efforts will have on low income people and I think that's really sad, and the College needs to be more thoughtful of that, but I do think that the town needs to be revamped so I do support the project."

Most students have heard about instances where wealthy residents and developers come into a neighborhood and pour money into communities to "revitalize" them, resulting in the displacement of the original, poorer residents. Most students that I spoke to or surveyed are very critical of this being a possible result of the efforts, but at the same time are uncertain if this will happen given the location and demographics in Waterville, Maine. It is a city that really needs an economic boost, and many people think that Colby's money really could help the town. Students view the revitalization efforts as an opportunity to be seized, but are worried that the efforts will hurt poor folks who have lived in Waterville for their entire lives.

In her interview, Vanya points out that she would individually benefit from the revitalization efforts. *"I think selfishly that it would augment the Colby experience. I think it would make Waterville more enjoyable."* Waterville and its downtown are facing decay and besides a few shops and restaurants, there is little reason for college students to get excited to visit the downtown and get off campus. Most students think that the revitalization efforts will be successful in making Waterville more enjoyable, but struggle with the fact that it may only benefit themselves and the wealthier populations in the city.

"It would strengthen Colby and Waterville relationships among the wealthier people who live in Waterville, but I think it would distance people from the low income residents in Waterville. Overall though I am in support, I just think that we need to be mindful of the implications because I know that there are bad ones."

Many students and Waterville residents would love to see the relationship between Colby College and the greater Waterville community improve. Vanya believes that the efforts will only improve the relationship between Colby and the wealthier Waterville residents. Still given all of Vanya's qualms, she supports the efforts. Vanya, like most Colby students I talked to, believe the pros outweigh the cons.

I asked Vanya what the ideal Downtown Waterville would look like to her and she paused for a moment and said, *"I would like to see empty stores and buildings to be cleaned up. Invest in them so their businesses can boom more and clean up the exterior so that they're aesthetically pleasing. I would put something in there that is more activity based, not stores or restaurants, but something like a bowling alley that would allow people to interact with each other."* If Vanya's vision is materialized and it does not result in a gentrified downtown, I believe most Colby students would be ecstatic and would be thrilled to live in the dormitory.

Arianna is a senior at Colby College from New York City, majoring in Geology and Sociology. She has been following news regarding the revitalization efforts closely and is optimistic. Her interview is a good depiction of students' worldview about a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing downtown.

“I think Main Street could be bigger and more inviting for people who don't live here. I am kind of thinking on the lines of Brunswick. It is adorable and great to walk down. There's a lot of different stores and it is well maintained. It feels welcoming, it feels very nice, it attracts people that don't just live there and go to school there. It would be nice if Waterville Main Street had that feel, of more of a college town. I mean obviously, there are two schools here. It would make sense if it had that kind of feel.”



Brunswick, Maine's Downtown

Arianna, like many people who I interviewed, used Brunswick, Maine as a comparison of what Waterville could and should be after the development in the downtown is finished.

Brunswick is a picturesque, quaint coastal Maine town that is home to Bowdoin College, an elite liberal arts college similar to Colby. Bowdoin's campus is next to Brunswick's Main Street. The two communities mold well together and enjoy each other's amenities. The students frequent the town's restaurants, cafes, gelato bars, shops and parks. The Brunswick locals take strolls through

the campus and enjoy the college's art museum. People love Brunswick because the downtown is very cute, friendly, pedestrian friendly, vibrant and has a great variety of shops and stores. Colby students wonder if Waterville's Main Street could ever be similar because Waterville is not on the coast and its economy is on the decline. However, Waterville does have Colby College and the financial resources and wealthy students that come with the school.

Arianna sees potential in Waterville. Its closed up mills can be repurposed into office spaces, stores or public art. It's not what is there, but how it is used and the "vibe" that is given off by the physical assets. In order to attract creative students and professionals, a welcoming and diverse city is extremely important and the physical buildings and infrastructure can play a large role in cultivating this feeling.

"And I think just, yeah I mean they have most of what you need, they have pretty much everything you could want for food or shopping, I think it's that Waterville feels kind of abandoned and if it felt more welcoming more people would want to come. In Brunswick, they have transformed all of the old mills into office spaces and to stores, I think it would be really cool if someone took some of the abandoned buildings and made them look less abandoned and did something with them. Because there's a lot and they are very structurally sound and I think they have a lot of potential if they fix the broken windows and clean them up a bit. Yeah that's basically what I want to see from Waterville."

Arianna discusses that she hopes that the new Downtown Waterville can be a hub where all of Waterville's communities come together. Improving the relationships of the colleges and the Waterville community is one of students' greatest desires from the revitalization efforts.

“And making Waterville community more connected with Colby and Thomas college as well. Make Downtown Waterville sort of the central hub between everything that's happening around it. A place that everyone can come together and it's welcoming for everybody.”

Andy is a senior Geology major from Connecticut whose worldview and knowledge about the revitalization efforts are representative of the greater student body at Colby. He has heard a little bit about the efforts, especially the dormitory and overall he has a fairly positive opinion on it all. What is key for Andy is that more Waterville locals get jobs and not bottom-level positions.

I've heard a bit about the revitalization efforts, I haven't heard too many details about them. I think it's a pretty good idea and I think that a lot of positive change will come from it. As long as it's gone about in the right way. I've heard that we're trying to get an off campus dorm downtown, I think that's a really good idea to integrate Colby into the town and have students down there. I feel like right now we're up on top of this hill and just have this separation from the town and even though we're a part of it, we aren't really. I also heard of bringing in stores and buying up the buildings and bringing the tech industry here. I think that's good, but I think we need to make sure that people aren't brought in from the outside and it's people from Waterville that are getting the jobs. Ideally, not just the very low level jobs, but give people training to be managers or higher up positions so people of Waterville can make the most out of the company that's brought in.

Tony thinks that Waterville's needs Colby to lift itself up from a slump. Waterville once thrived from a manufacturing industry that is no more. Colby is the only real source of money in

the town and the only institution that has connections to make partnerships that could potentially “kick start” the city.

“I think Waterville needs a kickstart from Colby. It was a city built on an industry that doesn't really exist any more. To my knowledge, the town is struggling to find an identity since losing its major industry of the 19th and 20th centuries. I think Colby should have a place in that kickstart, but it needs to be done with consideration for the citizens of Waterville, not just what benefits students would see. I participated in a discussion on social class this spring and was able to learn a lot about a topic I hadn't heard much about. I'm excited to see what Colby can do to incentivize students to go into Waterville more, but I am concerned about how that is going to make the town look at us students and how it is going to affect the relationship between students and the city. Additionally, I don't think that Waterville will 'recover' until its community can stand on its own without Colby. So I think Colby's roll in revitalizing Waterville should focus on making the community stronger from within. Economic stimulus can have negative effects on certain demographics, but I am thinking mostly about the line that the college has to walk in making the general life of the city grow compared with the lives of some citizens who wouldn't benefit from heavy stimulus. In summary, I think if Colby were to sit by and not do anything, we would be doing more of a disservice to Waterville than if we were working to stimulate its economy again.”

Traditionalists and Professionals completely disagree on what is great about Waterville and its community, and the two groups have completely different visions on what the downtown should be like after the revitalization efforts. Colby College is the biggest investor in these efforts and is catering to the needs of their faculty and students; however, the majority of the city

does not have the financial resources as the staff or students at Colby. The Professionals want newer and higher-quality shops, yet the Traditionalists love the shops they have and do not have the money for more expensive shops. Students are out of the loop and have not formed strong opinions on the revitalization efforts. With such varying attitudes and desires about Downtown Waterville's revitalization efforts, it is hard to envision a successful outcome that attracts the Creative Class, overall population growth, and economic development. If the city's communities are not on the same page for a somewhat similar idea of what the downtown should be like when this project develops further, the purpose for the investment may never become a reality.

CONCLUSION

Young people are leaving the state of Maine, and Colby College struggles to attract talented young faculty. Waterville's thriving mills and factories of the past have closed down and no businesses have been interested in investing in this rural Maine town of sixteen-thousand people. Colby and the city are working to change that by reimagining what their downtown looks like and offers. By revitalizing Downtown Waterville, they hope to make the quality of life in the city much higher to attract more residents, businesses and visitors. If these efforts are successful, the College will be able to bring top talent to work at their campus, and the city will be able to attract great employers, especially in the STEM fields. The city has seen consistent economic decline since its mills have closed and these revitalization efforts may be the golden ticket to stimulate economic growth.

Scholars have studied growth of a new highly-educated creative class of professionals who highly value the atmosphere and culture of the cities they live and work in. To attract these creative, hard working professionals, cities must be diverse, open, creative and have great

cultural and lifestyle amenities. Members of the Downtown Partnership appear to be using a strategy similar to Richard Florida's to attract the Creative Class. However, the city's community is not so open and in agreement on what they want their downtown to look like and offer.

Traditionalists, Professionals and Students have their own unique desires for the revitalization efforts and lack of consensus may ultimately lead to unsuccessful efforts to cultivate a diverse and open community. Tens of millions of dollars are being poured into the downtown, mostly by Colby College and once the efforts are in motion, lack of approval or excitement about the developments may appear and create animosity and tension in the city.

Without clearly advertising the plans and intentions of the partners of these efforts, the community will remain poorly informed and unaligned with the mission. Analysis of interviews and survey responses show that the different members of the Waterville community do not have strong relationships with one another. Each community is fairly isolated from one another and sense of solidarity as one greater Waterville community. Building a beautiful downtown will not solve the problem of an unwelcoming and separated community. If the community does not come together and find an outcome of these efforts that is good for everyone, attracting the Creative Class will be unsuccessful in Waterville.

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