



An initiative of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Secretary Bob Durand, in partnership with the City of Lawrence.

Lawrence Arlington Neighborhood Charrette

Redefining the River's Edge

Dear Friend of Community Preservation:

UrbanRiver Visions is the Community Preservation Initiative's newest project. The initiative provides community leaders with the tools, information, and technical assistance necessary to help them plan for future growth. This new project represents an important next step because it helps facilitate the community's vision and planning to explore ways in which the downtown can be revitalized using the river as a focal point. All of the initiative's efforts have the same goal, to empower communities to make balanced and forward thinking growth decisions that preserve and enhance the quality of life in our communities and throughout the Commonwealth.

Rivers have long defined the core of many of the Commonwealth's urban areas. The harnessing of these rivers for power and manufacturing characterized the Commonwealth's growth in the nineteenth century as a center for commerce and prosperity. The legacy of this era is reflected in the mill buildings that define the heart of many cities and towns and represent a celebrated element of our built environment. Recently, our communities suffered with several decades of decline in the industries these mills once housed. The legacy of land and water pollution that accompanied earlier industrial development has been a burden to our communities.

Now, many communities are poised to reexamine the role of their rivers as a source of urban vitality, as an amenity, and as an attractor of new enterprises and jobs. UrbanRiver Visions is designed to take these efforts a step further by working with individual communities to help shape their future and reconnect them to the river, making it once again a focal point for commerce and community.

This project defines and provides the framework for reclaiming these rivers as environmental and economic assets, integrating them back into our civic lives. It is a celebration of rivers, communities, and creativity.

I hope that you find the accompanying information useful. Electronic versions of these documents are available on the UrbanRiver Visions web site at www.urbanrivervisions.org. I wish you the best of luck and I look forward to continuing our partnership as we work to make these dreams a reality.

Very truly yours,

Bob Durand

The Place

The study area for the Spicket River - Arlington Neighborhood charrette lies on either side of Broadway in northwest Lawrence. To the east of Broadway is the Arlington neighborhood comprised of a dense mix of single-family and multi-family housing. Several small industrial buildings are located on lots both north and south of the Spicket River in the neighborhood. Broadway is a commercial street lined with small businesses on its east side. The land along the Spicket River west of Broadway is occupied by Malden Mills, several other industrial uses, and vacant mill buildings. Several hundred feet west of Broadway is Stevens Pond, the original pond for the adjoining mill complex. On November 18, 2002, charrette participants considered strategies to enhance the neighborhood, open up access to the river and the pond, and encourage positive redevelopment in the district.

A Shared Vision

The charrette participants expressed a consensus that solutions for the neighborhood should come from the community itself, and that residents should not look primarily to people from outside the neighborhood to solve neighborhood problems. The active participation of neighborhood residents in the charrette was the key to its success.

While many of the physical changes called for by the charrette's participants were linked to the Spicket River, the three key elements of community development that were discussed focused on a broader set of issues: creation of more housing; creation of new open spaces; and greater economic opportunities for area residents.

Next Steps

The following steps will advance the community's vision for the Arlington Neighborhood:

- Create a Task Force to examine legislative issues such as zoning, economic development incentive programs, and rent stabilization programs that affect the ability of the neighborhood to carry out redevelopment and support local residents
- Develop a program to promote more effective use of existing city services such as trash pick-up and policing; coordinate with the "Weed & Seed" program in this effort
- Initiate conversations with Malden Mills about the future of their buildings and access to Stevens Pond
- Initiate work force training programs in the neighborhood
- Strengthen the capacity of the Arlington Neighborhood Association to carry out their mission of neighborhood improvement, and bring additional stakeholders into the process



The Charrette

During the two months preceding the charrette, several meetings were held with the Arlington Neighborhood Association and city staff to define the geographic focus area for the charrette and the overall themes that the session should address. These themes helped to guide the discussions of the 30 people who took part in the charrette on Monday evening, November 18, 2002, at the Arlington School. The evening program began with informal conversations among the participants over a dinner provided by a local restaurant. This was followed by a brief presentation of existing conditions in the area and of examples of open space and residential and commercial developments that might help people to visualize opportunities in the Arlington neighborhood.

The balance of the charrette consisted of an open conversation among all attendees. Community residents identified the key issues in their neighborhood, and their visions for community improvements. While the evening's participants included people from throughout Lawrence, neighborhood residents were invited to speak first and encouraged to speak in detail about options for addressing neighborhood concerns.



UrbanRiver Visions Lawrence Arlington Neighborhood Charrette: Spicket River

The communities of Athol, Chicopee, Easthampton, Hudson, Fall River, Lawrence, and Worcester held charrettes in the fall of 2002 as part of EOE's UrbanRiver Visions project. After the charrettes, all the communities came together in Hudson on December 19, 2002 to share their visions. Each of the UrbanRiver Visions communities seized this opportunity to define its vision for the future. The visions reflect an overall community consensus about the relationship between the community and its riverfront. These visions represent important starting points that can continue to be refined and modified over time in response to new information, opportunities, changed circumstances, or unforeseen difficulties.

This poster summarizes the findings of the Lawrence Arlington Neighborhood UrbanRiver Visions Charrette that was held on November 18, 2002 at the Arlington School. The charrette resulted in a vision plan and action plan that are summarized here. This side of the poster documents community goals, issues, and possible next steps. The reverse side includes a Vision Plan and describes actions needed to achieve this vision.

Additional charrette information is on file at the Lawrence Planning Department in a project binder that contains verbatim notes from the charrette, copies of powerpoint presentations, base maps, and other technical information.

For additional information, please visit www.urbanrivervisions.org

UrbanRiver Visions Consultant Team:
EOEA selected Goody, Clancy & Associates and its team of consultants to provide professional assistance to each of the communities in the program. Lawrence Arlington Neighborhood consultant team members also included Maria Van Dusen and Landman Planning Consultants.



UrbanRiver Visions



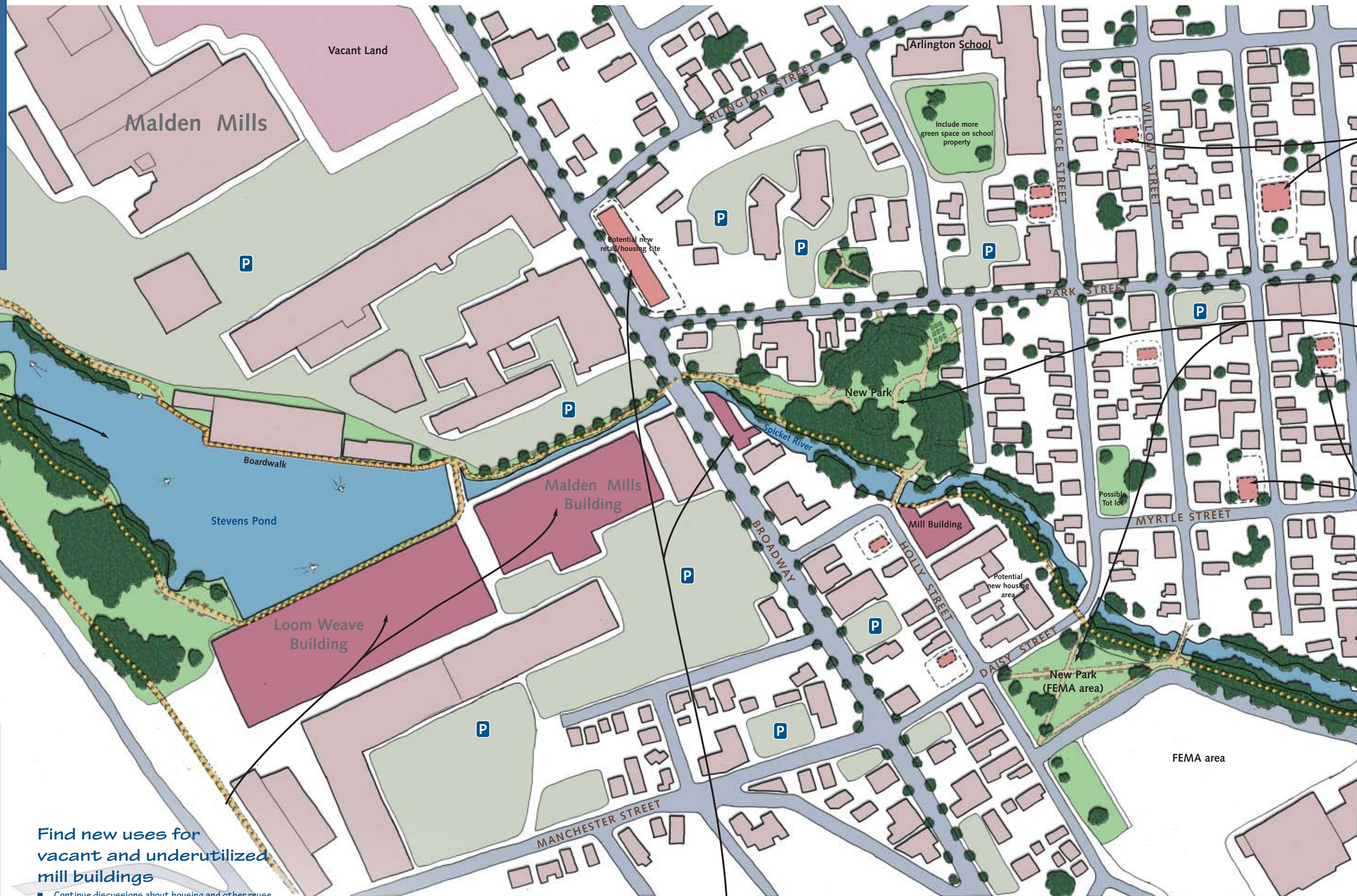
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A Shared Vision for the Arlington Neighborhood

The charrette participants expressed a consensus that solutions for the neighborhood should come from the community itself, and that residents should identify and help to implement neighborhood improvements. The creation of new open space areas along the Spicket River, around Stevens Pond, and on small lots in the neighborhood was a key goal. A second key goal is the creation of additional housing in the neighborhood, along Broadway, and perhaps in former mill buildings.

Lawrence Arlington Neighborhood: Vision for the Future

Community solutions for community needs—new housing, open space and water access



Provide public access to and around Stevens Pond

- Work with Malden Mills and other property owners to create paths around the pond
- Explore the creation of trails on unused railroad right-of-way
- Explore the creation of roller skating and biking facilities on the large flat areas - indoors or out
- Provide access to the pond for rowboats and canoes

Improve the quality of the neighborhood streetscape

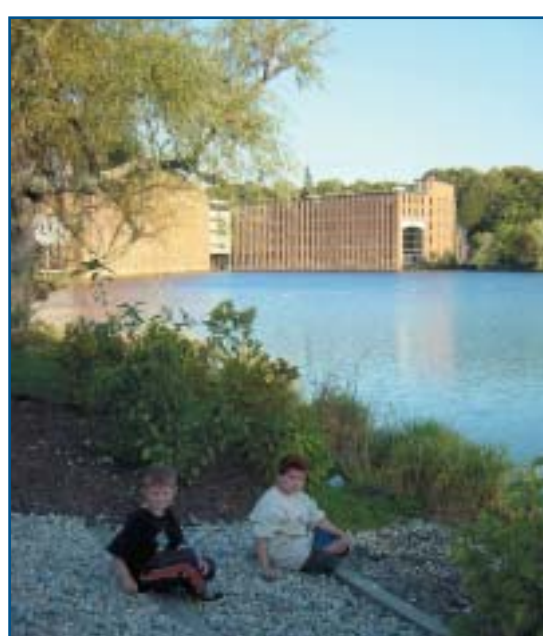
- Plant street trees on Broadway and Park Street
- Add street lighting
- Create a neighborhood "gateway" at Broadway and Park Street
- Coordinate neighborhood activities with the "Weed and Seed" program
- Work with merchants to improve facades along Broadway



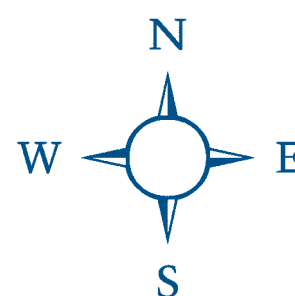
This mill building on Holly Street would make attractive housing.



The river is an untapped amenity in the heart of the neighborhood.



Clock Tower Place in Maynard (shown here) accommodates public access to the water. Stevens Pond could be improved in a similar way.

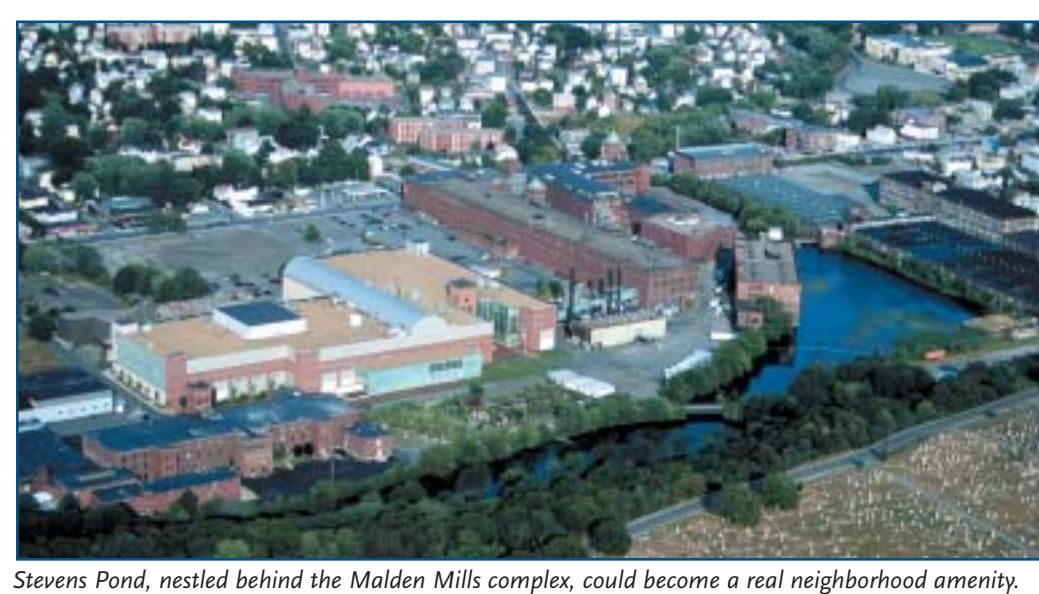


Find new uses for vacant and underutilized mill buildings

- Continue discussions about housing and other reuse options with owners of the Loom Weave Building
- Work with Malden Mills to find new users who will create jobs in underutilized buildings



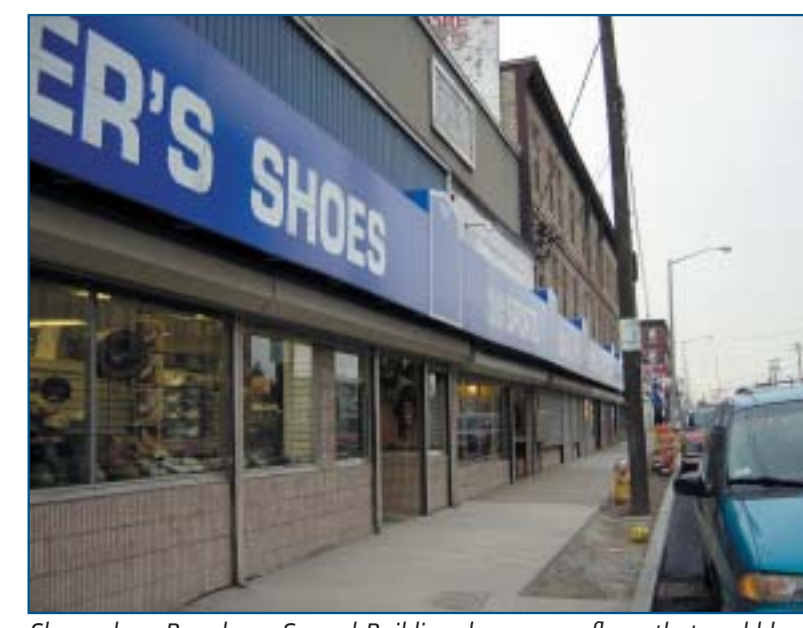
A neighborhood park could be created on the river. A new pedestrian bridge would connect Holly Street and Park Street.



Stevens Pond, nestled behind the Malden Mills complex, could become a real neighborhood amenity. (Landslides)

Add commercial and housing uses on Broadway

- Vacant and underutilized parcels on Broadway provide opportunities to create needed facilities.
- Create new, mixed use development (first-floor retail with housing above) on the parcel bounded by Broadway/Park/Arlington; the parcel is owned by Malden Mills
- Assist the owners of retail buildings on Broadway with the rehabilitation of vacant upper floor housing units
- Work with Malden Mills to find additional tenants for the recently renovated retail building; determine whether the building could accommodate existing neighborhood non-profit organizations and community meeting space
- Work with Malden Mills to determine a long-term use for their large vacant parcel on the west side of Broadway - the Whitman Street neighborhood study suggested that the parcel could be used as a soccer field for the short to mid-term



Shops along Broadway. Several Buildings have upper floors that could be rehabilitated to make attractive housing.



Two UrbanRiver Vision study areas along the Spicket River in Lawrence (shown in red) are part of a larger community initiative that is creating new and enhanced open spaces all along the river.

Find creative ways to add to housing stock in the neighborhood

- Add third floor units by building "up" not "out"
- Explore opportunities for using modular housing construction technology
- Create infill housing on selected vacant lots

Create new parks next to the Spicket River; create a continuous trail along the river

- Use the existing vacant land along the Spicket River to create new neighborhood open spaces that includes a variety of uses:
 - The parks could include a playground, a tot lot, community gardens (on raised beds), landscaped seating areas, community amphitheater, farmers' market, and access to the water's edge
- Work with the First Essex Bank to open up a connection between the new park and Broadway
- Design the parks in a way that can withstand periodic flooding - and that adds flood storage capacity and groundwater recharge to the watershed
- Provide access to the water for canoes and kayaks
- Consider building a new footbridge across the Spicket River to connect the future park to Holly Street
- Create a continuous greenway along the Spicket River that connects the neighborhood to Stevens Pond

Use vacant land in the neighborhood to create housing, parking, or small parks

- Vacant parcels present opportunities for a number of these uses, and a variety of options could be explored:
 - Determine whether vacant lots could accommodate new housing, especially 2, 3, or 4 unit buildings with affordable home ownership opportunities
 - Where lots are too small to accommodate new housing, consider their use as "pocket parking areas" for neighborhood residents, but design such areas with landscaping and trees to make them more attractive
 - Where lots are too small to accommodate new housing consider their use as "pocket parks" or community gardens (on raised beds), or consider consolidation with adjoining residential properties

Enact new or revised legislation to enhance housing and economic opportunities for the neighborhood

- Review zoning in the district including use designations (such as the vacant land on Park Street currently zoned for industrial use that the community would like to use for open space); reconsider requirements such as the minimum lot size for housing that prevents vacant lots from being redeveloped for residential use
- Establish a city/state/neighborhood partnership to identify funding options for housing, open space development, and work force training
- Ensure that new housing is not constructed in flood prone areas
- Explore zoning options that promote affordable housing

Work with the city to improve enforcement of existing regulations in order to enhance neighborhood quality of life

- Work with DPW to enforce no dumping rules and to clean up existing problems on vacant lots
- Provide better information to residents about DPW pick-up of large trash items such as appliances, computers, and tires
- Consider creation of "neighborhood rangers" to improve public safety and enhance enforcement of no dumping laws

