

LEWISTON AUBURN
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Blueprint for Economic Growth in the LA Metropolitan Region



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BLUEPRINT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE LA METROPOLITAN REGION

SUMMARY OF GOALS + STRATEGIES

INCREASE THE POPULATION BASE OF THE LA REGION

Strategy: Create and Promote a Positive Perception of the Region

Short-term Action: Create regional marketing of aligned Chamber and Municipal messaging to provide consistent messaging that enhances regional perception.

INCREASE BUSINESS REVENUE IN THE LA REGION

Strategy: Strengthen Existing Businesses and Attract New Businesses to the LA Region

Short-term Action 1: Address labor shortages in target industries by matching existing and newly attracted workforce with employers.

Short-term Action 2: Support entrepreneurs and incubate new businesses.

INCREASE CONSUMER SPENDING IN THE LA REGION

Strategy: Increase Proportion of Consumer Spending at Local Businesses

Short-term Action 1: Create and implement a "buy local" campaign.

Short-term Action 2: Catalyze adoption of online purchasing for local businesses.

Strategy: Improve the Workforce of the LA Region

Short-term Action 1: Align and coordinate educational opportunities through the implementation of Strengthen LA.

Short-term Action 2: Identify target sectors and employers within sectors to plan for the type and scale of future workforce needs.

BACKGROUND

This Blueprint for Economic Growth was created at the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce Regional Roundtable, whose membership is composed of Regional Leaders + Champions. The Roundtable represents leadership from finance, economic development, community development, education, and emerging and legacy industries. The Blueprint seeks to counter the negative economic impacts of the pandemic through short-term actions aimed at recovery. These actions are balanced with mid-term and long-term actions to achieve long-term economic growth in the Lewiston Auburn metropolitan region.

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REGIONAL STRENGTHENERS

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City of Auburn Mayor Jason Levesque
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City of Lewiston City Administrator, Denis D'Auteuil
Community Credit Union President + CEO, Jennifer Hogan
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Hilton Garden Inn Auburn Riverwatch Management Company Representative + CEO, Jessica Donovan
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BLUEPRINT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE LA METROPOLITAN REGION

INCREASE THE POPULATION BASE OF THE LA REGION

Metric¹: Increase the number of people who live in the LA region by X% by X date.

Strategy: Create and Promote a Positive Perception of the Region

Short-term Action 1: *Create regional marketing of aligned Chamber and Municipal messaging to provide consistent messaging that enhances regional perception.* Create a regional marketing campaign with Chamber and municipal aligned messaging to avoid redundancy and inconsistency. Identify success stories as evidence of the region's vitality, opportunity, and ingenuity. The messaging of the cities and Chamber needn't be part of only one marketing campaign, but should be cohesive so as to enhance the effects of each campaign.

Leads: LA Metro Chamber, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, City of Auburn, City of Lewiston

Partners: Regional employers with talent attraction goals and budgets; cultural institutions, community and immigrant leaders.

Short-term Action 2: *Implement a coordinated regional marketing and public relations campaign via earned, owned, and paid channels.* Target individuals with professional certifications, associate's degrees, or advanced degrees in Construction, Healthcare, Education, Finance, Manufacturing, and Agriculture. Highlight affordable real estate and rental costs, arts and cultural offerings, outdoor recreation, and accessibility of quality healthcare.

Leads: LA Metro Chamber, City of Auburn, City of Lewiston

Partners: Regional employers with talent attraction goals and budgets; partners from Short-term Action 1, digital media, social media.

Mid-term Actions: *Identify and implement actions to ensure quality of life improvements and sustainability, including maintaining and growing a vibrant arts, culture, and dining sector.* Leverage placemaking strategies that enhance cultural offerings.

Long-term actions: *Address challenges that will enhance quality of life and contribute to negative perception of the region.* Ensure affordable, accessible, quality childcare is available for working families; improve outcomes and perceptions of school systems and educational outcomes; provide quality public transportation that connects workforce to key industry employers and regional transportation systems.

¹ **Metrics:** Numeric values for percent (%) change and the timeline for the change to be achieved will be identified from historical + current data; and updated by July 2021.

INCREASE BUSINESS REVENUE IN THE LA REGION

Metrics²:

- Increase the revenue from small businesses by x% by X date.
- Increase the revenue from corporations by x% by X date.
- Increase the tax contributions to municipalities and the State of Maine by x% by X date.
- Increase the number of small businesses by x% by X date.

Strategy: Strengthen Existing Businesses and Attract New Businesses to the LA Region

Short-term Action 1: *Address labor shortages in target industries by matching existing and newly attracted workforce with employers.* Leverage Strengthen LA and workforce efforts in the strategy "Improve Workforce of the LA Region" to coordinate training and education programs specified by employers to address their needs. Utilize tailored messaging to promote a positive perception of the region and attract the appropriate workforce that will strengthen existing businesses.

Leads: LA Metro Chamber and Strengthen LA partners, regional employers.

Partners: Auburn + Lewiston Adult Ed, University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn Campus (USMLAC), University of Maine Augusta (UMA), Central Maine Community College Workforce Development Programs (CMCC), Maine College of Health Professions (MCHP), CareerCenter, Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), Lewiston Adult Promise (LeAP).

Short-term Action 2: *Support entrepreneurs and incubate new businesses.* Increase and enhance entrepreneur supports, including navigation of resources, financial literacy programs, and access to start-up capital.

Leads: LA Metro Chamber Top Gun and Economic Development, Auburn and Lewiston Economic Development Departments.

Partners: Coastal Enterprises (CEI), New Ventures, SCORE, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), Maine Centers for Entrepreneurs (MCE), regional banks and credit unions (Bangor Savings Bank, Community Credit Union), ProsperityME.

Mid-term Action 1: *Identify and advocate for policy solutions that support regional economic growth, small businesses, and targeted industries.*

Mid-term Action 2: *Increase business to business activity.* Increase awareness of and connections with local businesses who can supply area businesses; promote living local, shopping local, and supporting the business community and economy of the region.

Long-term Action: *Increase the educational attainment of the population, increase the population's disposable income, support cluster industries.*

² **Metrics:** Numeric values for percent (%) change and the timeline for the change to be achieved will be identified from historical + current data; and updated by July 2021.

INCREASE CONSUMER SPENDING IN THE LA REGION

Metrics³:

- Increase overall consumer spending in the LA region by x% by X date.
- Increase consumer spending in target industries, as determined by industry-specific data.
- Increase income of residents of the LA region by X% by X date.

Strategy: Increase Proportion of Consumer Spending at Local Businesses

Short-term Action 1: *Create and implement a "buy local" campaign that promotes local businesses and facilitates easy online or low-risk purchasing.*

Leads: Bangor Savings Bank Buoy Local, LA Metro Chamber.

Partners: Downtown Lewiston Association, City of Auburn, City of Lewiston, Town of Poland, Town of Lisbon, regional merchants.

Short-term Action 2: *Catalyze the adoption of online purchasing for local businesses.* This includes technology and financial support to enhance web presence and improve software systems to allow local businesses to compete with online retailers. Explore options for a unified e-commerce portal for local merchants.

Leads: Bangor Savings Bank Buoy Local, LA Metro Chamber.

Partners: Downtown Lewiston Association, City of Auburn, City of Lewiston, Town of Poland, Town of Lisbon, regional merchants.

Mid-term Action 1: *Increase the number of residents participating in the workforce.* Increase overall employment rates and increase the wages of residents in the region.

Mid-term Action 2: *Increase the local residency rates of those who work in the region, utilizing incentives from employers and municipalities.*

Long-term Action: *Increase the average and median incomes of the people who live in the LA region.* Leverage actions in the "Improve the Workforce of the LA Region" strategy to increase skills, education, and wages of residents.

³ **Metrics:** Numeric values for percent (%) change and the timeline for the change to be achieved will be identified from historical + current data; and updated by July 2021.

INCREASE CONSUMER SPENDING IN THE LA REGION

Metrics⁴:

- Increase overall consumer spending in the LA region by x% by X date.
- Increase consumer spending by target industries, as determined by industry specific data.
- Increase income of residents of the LA region by X% by X date.

Strategy: Improve the Workforce of the LA Region

Short-term Action 1: *Align and coordinate education opportunities through the implementation of Strengthen LA.* With a short-term focus on grade 9 and above, work with area schools, adult-ed programs, colleges, university-run and employer-run training programs and reimbursement programs to align offerings and ease navigation by learners.

Leads: LA Metro Chamber and Strengthen LA partners.

Partners: Auburn + Lewiston Adult Ed, University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn Campus (USMLAC), University of Maine Augusta (UMA), Central Maine Community College Workforce Development Programs (CMCC), Maine College of Health Professions (MCHP), CareerCenter, Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), Lewiston Adult Promise (LeAP).

Short-term Action 2: *Identify target sectors and employers within sectors to plan for the type and scale of future workforce needs.* Define career pathways and education programming to support upward mobility of the workforce. Note: Strengthen LA is focused on Healthcare, Construction/Trades, and Childcare/Education.

Leads: LA Metro Chamber

Partners: Strengthen LA Employers, specifically in the Healthcare, Construction/Trades, and Childcare/Education sectors.

Mid-term Action: *Address workforce system weaknesses and gaps, including availability of childcare and transportation.* This includes business leadership and advocacy for expanded second and third shift childcare options, coordinated and targeted employer-specific or region-specific transportation options, and addressing stagnant wage growth.

Long-term Action: *Improve the outcomes of public and private birth-12 education institutions and programs.* Increase graduation rates, school readiness, and 3rd grade reading levels of student populations of the region. This includes providing business leadership and advocacy for improved outcomes.

⁴ **Metrics:** Numeric values for percent (%) change and the timeline for the change to be achieved will be identified from historical + current data; and updated by July 2021.

Commonly Used Terms and Their Meaning

Short-term Action: Actions to undertake and complete within 12 months.

Mid-term Action: Actions to undertake within 2 years and see measurable progress within 5 years.

Long-term Action: Actions to undertake within years and see measurable progress within 10 years.

Regional Leaders: The top tier of membership with the LA Metro Chamber. Members of this tier are making additional contributions to the region and taking additional responsibility for community and business leadership.

Regional Champions: The second highest tier of membership with the LA Metro Chamber. Members of this tier are making additional contributions to the region and taking additional responsibility for community and business leadership.

Regional Partners: The third highest tier of membership with the LA Metro Chamber. Members of this tier are making additional contributions to the region and taking additional responsibility for community and business leadership.

Regional Roundtable: A group of community leaders which meets quarterly to review the LA Metro Chamber's actions and strategies for enhancing the economic development and quality of life of the region; composed of Regional Leaders and Champions.

Media: Earned, owned, and paid channels references media and advertising placements paid for on TV, air, digital, and print platforms and channels; as well as media and advertising shared on owned places (websites, social accounts), and media or free publicity earned through organic coverage and word-of-mouth.

Placemaking: Placemaking is the process of creating quality places in which people want to live, work, play, and learn.

Quality: Quality is used throughout to mean "quality" in the context of its placement, referencing the benchmarks of quality known and widely accepted for that sector or industry.

Quality Childcare: References the Quality for ME rating system utilized by the Department of Health and Human Services in Maine for licensed childcare programs.

Quality Public Transportation: Quality public transportation ensures that people reach everyday destinations, such as jobs, schools, and healthcare facilities, safely and reliably.

Small Business: Small business size standards set by the Small Business Administration indicate companies with 500 employees or fewer, and average annual receipts under \$7.5 million.

Throughout this Blueprint, Small Business references businesses with 49 or less employees, which comprises over 95% of businesses in Androscoggin County.

Strengthen LA: A regional collaborative effort of education, workforce development, training, and employers focused on increasing the supply of trained labor in the sectors of healthcare, construction/trades, and childcare and education.

Business-to-Business: Business that is conducted between companies, rather than between a company and an individual consumer

Local Residency Rates: The number or percent of people who work in the region that also reside in the region.

Consumer Spending: Consumer spending is the total money spent on final goods and services by individuals and households for personal use and enjoyment in an economy.