

Planning framework for Auburn 150th Anniversary (sesquicentennial) based on two meetings

Key considerations for City/partner events to be included as part of anniversary year

These benchmarks, while not having to be met by all events, would help to ensure a diverse year and maximize overall engagement. The expectation would be that the city AND partner groups would have an event summary sheet that would denote how they achieve these and their measurable goals for year-end review.

- Tracking/estimating attendance
 - Committee may want to set a goal for total involvement
 - e.g. 150 events for the 150th, or 24,000 attendees for the year to match city's population
- Is new event/activity considered one-time or will it be repeated?
 - This could be a year to try new events to gauge response and make them part of the city's regular event calendar (or of a partner organization's calendar)
- Would it attract engage people from outside Auburn and/or former citizens?
- Does it highlight Auburn as a desirable place to live, work, play, learn?
- What transportation options to ensure residents can access event?
- What is the target age group for the event/activity?
- Does the schedule represent the diversity of our City and aim to be inclusive?

Promotion of Auburn's historic assets

Promote Auburn's historic locations for programs/tours/self-guided activities, including the potential for developing a printed "passport" where residents/visitors would visit sites, receive a stamp/initial and have a chance to win prizes (prizes would be an opportunity for small business sponsorships). A schedule of set dates for properties being accessible would need to be developed (eg one Saturday per month) as well as a standard set of historic facts that would need to be verified for each site to ensure consistency.

- From city:
 - Need list of current listed properties on National Register and a communication should be sent to each property owner describing the anniversary year celebration and the interest in having the public visit their property during a designate time window in 2019.
 - Need list of properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for possible listing in 2019, Maine Historic Preservation Commission has suggested a partnership to complete an application and other necessary materials for one or two properties.
 - Cemeteries (need listing/map) could be included with a highlight unique figures from Auburn's history buried in each
 - City Council could consider becoming a Certified Local Government under Maine Historic Preservation for the anniversary year. Designation comes with access to funding to promote/restore historic assets. Program application from MHPC is available.
- From property owners: Permission to promote/willingness to host visitors on a schedule TBD

Brainstormed City-managed events from staff/public meetings in January and February

- New Year's Auburn (idea to be considered) – This event could launch the anniversary year in 2019 (though timing would be a challenge without a lead and staff commitment) or it could close out the anniversary year and be linked into the launch of the State of Maine bicentennial under planning right now.
- Mt. Apatite tailings pile (turnover pile and host event) – Idea floated by Eric Cousens
- River-based event with a band (on the water?) – Idea floated by Sabrina Best
- Longest continual hockey game in history hosted at NSBA – idea floated by Jason Paquin
- Citywide photo staged on Goff Hill – idea floated by Liz Allen
- Citizens Police and Fire Academies
- City holiday celebrations and use of a vintage Santa
- Pop-up shops/markets in downtown (Festival Plaza, New Auburn?)
- Auburn Citizen of the Decade Project
 - Seek nominations for Auburn citizens from each decade of our existence as a city to highlight their unique contributions in their homes, neighborhoods, our city, our region, our state, our country, our world
 - Would need a targeted committee for this to screen applications, rank/select and archive the materials
- Database/use of technology to connect citizens to the celebration and to city services long term

Brainstormed School-supported events

- ED talks (need more details from ELHS on how these might be connected)- shared by Michelle McClellan
- Community service day at EL (will review how to link up) – shared by Michelle McClellan
- Elementary school traditions – shared by Michelle McClellan
- Maine/Auburn history units – Auburn-educator Bim Gibson has interest in student projects)
- Art projects at HS (more info needed) – shared by Michelle McClellan
- Kids as Curators is an existing Auburn Middle School partnership with Museum LA that could be leveraged. It runs from October through February of each year – idea shared by Rachel Desgrosseilliers
- A coloring book of historic places in Auburn could be published for younger grades and then used in future years as an ongoing product. – Idea shared by John Henderson

Brainstormed Partner-supported events

- The Androscoggin Historical Society hosts Monthly Lectures (September – May). The schedule for September 2018 through May 2019 will be set during summer of 2018
- Androscoggin Historical Society research opportunities for students groups (think PAL, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA Pathfinders, etc). Since AHS has entry fees to conduct research, small sponsorship opportunities could exist for businesses to support youth learning the history of their family/apartment/house/neighborhood
- Androscoggin River Watershed Council hosts the annual Source to Sea Trek. It paddles through Auburn during August each year (August 2019) and Androscoggin Land Trust staff could make an introduction.
- Lost Valley – ski-athon idea – shared by Amanda Methot of Auburn economic development team

- LL Bean has a link to their company history in Auburn (Bean Bros men's clothing shop on Main Street where Gritty's is today) and might partner on a Main Street event along with their moveable yurt for winter events (think Winter Fest or a New Year's event). They also have gear that could be made available for kid/family friendly outdoor events.
- United New Auburn Association, as the stewards of the Marshall's popcorn truck, could be asked to schedule having it staged in historic location during days in summer of 2019
- The City should request Proclamations from dignitaries (Governor, State Legislature, U.S. Congress, U.S. Senate)
 - Carlene Tremblay of U.S. Senator Collins' office states that they already have theirs underway
- Museum LA launches a shoe industry-themed exhibit in October 2018 through August 2019. Rachel Desgrosseilliers has details and has suggested some enhancement of the exhibit at the Museum in the Bates Mill could be made to highlight Auburn's anniversary year.
- Androscoggin Land Trust will be celebrating its 30th anniversary year and has offered to host outdoor events that highlight Auburn's recreational/natural assets.
- LA Community Little Theater will be celebrating its 80th anniversary and envisions the potential for a musical/other event to co-celebrate anniversaries. They have also offered use of the theater space and upper floor classrooms for programs/guest lectures to get more citizens into their historic space. LA CLT also has an exhibit on the history of theater spaces that was completed for their 75th anniversary that could be put on display again.
- Western Maine Labor Council was contacted about possible partnership in support of a lecture on the 1937 Shoe Strike as part of a series of education programs. There has been no response as of yet.

Event ideas brainstormed without a lead partner

- Cultivation of sports tourism events such as alumni EL vs. Lewiston games
 - Games could be generation versus generation (1980's vs 1980s) and in between games there could be recognition of significant athletic accomplishments in the city's history (by either teams or individual athletes).
 - This was suggested by CMCC AD Dave Gonyea and could be a potential partner event with the Auburn Lewiston Sports Hall of Fame (former City Councilor Bob Stone serves on this group's board of directors)
 - There is a direct link in with the sports tourism concept for the city.
- Hosting "A day in the life" event, target the 1860's, to showcase cooking foods of era, crafting beer of era (partnership ask could be made of Gritty's), reenacting a civic activity, hosting a ball with period clothing, recreating school environment (West Auburn School House), etc
 - Potential link to a day of "no technology" (meaning smartphones, etc)
- Hosting "A day in the life" event, but a forward-looking event, perhaps bicentennial year. It would be intended to be aspirational event (future of education, future jobs, future of Auburn nature/open space, etc)
- The return of the Maine State Parade (TBD) was pitched by Chief Phil Crowell and has been discussed by other partners in LA such as the Franco Center. Since LA was the original host, it

would likely have a leg up in promoting being home to it again, however without a move soon, it's likely another Maine city will stake claim to this major event for 2020.

- Engagement should be made with reunion classes and programs to target for 2019 (ELHS, St. Dom's, CMCC)
- Create a special recognition programs for children born in 2019 as well as for residents that have lived in Auburn X years (50+, 75+, etc)
- Exploring Auburn: agricultural and forest land, trails, the river, and other outdoor recreation (highlight some historic gems like outlet beach, tot lot, ski jump, etc)
- Host a community pot luck or community reunion at an open space somewhere in Auburn (park in front of Great Falls Arts Center, Tot Lot, Outlet Beach, etc)
- Set up storefront "historic" galleries showing images of Auburn from different eras. These could be placed in empty storefronts in Auburn or partner with existing storefront businesses to have them hang historic photos/images in their business
- Find a program/event to ensure highlighting of Auburn's Native American history
- Celebration of the arts/entertainment over the years (original Auburn song, musicians). This could be part of a partnership with CLT given their on-going 80th anniversary planning.

Marketing Materials/Materials for sale

- The anniversary year will need a brand/logo
 - Need an in-kind partner or use existing city staff resources. To date, John Henderson has offered to create a concept for a fee (which would be recouped through product sales) and Liz Allen of the city has offered to design one in-kind.
- A printed of full year calendar of events will be needed. Staff have suggested this could be integrated with a "storymap" with GIS in a way similar to the WinterFestival
- A social media strategy for entire year will be needed. This could include the use of a daily historic photo and caption to engage people and grow the city's social media audience organically.
- To generate financial resources to fund events, the city should consider advertising on city assets
 - Dasher boards/in ice options at NSBA (also Ingersoll, city/school-owned ball fields?)
 - Public Services vehicles, citylink buses, others?
- The city should have the Clerk's office secure a schedule for the banner over Court Street to ensure regular use for celebrations/special events belonging to the city for its purposes.
- A booklet highlighting the Auburn history and the history of key partners/businesses should be published as the official souvenir of the anniversary year.
 - LA Metro Magazine is a potential partner (Jim Marston, 207-576-4844) to create this to avoid the city needing to hire an independent publisher as was done in the past. The unique nature of the LA Metro Magazine and its existing relationships/product make it a logical fit for a direct partnership.
 - From a discussion with the editor about potential, it was learned that a four month lead time would be needed from work start to publication of any booklet. If the intent would be to have a booklet available at the start of the year, that means August of 2018 to launch effort.

- To generate revenue to support the anniversary year, ad sales would be done. A key question would be should the city sell ads as part of the sponsorship packets or would LA Metro staff sell?
 - An unique feature of these ads would be to have story ads versus display ads. The intent being to the history of a company in Auburn (picture Proctor and Gamble buying an ad to tell the story of Tambrands here). They could be written by LA Metro staff to ensure editorial consistency and could have word ranges (1000 word piece versus 2000 word). Discount story ads could be available to non-profit partners to tell their stories (Woman’s Literary Union/Foss Mansion, for example)
- General content on Auburn history would supplement story ads and could be a role for partners like Androscoggin Historical Society or Museum LA.
- There is a likely market to sell these booklets as a souvenir and that should be factored into budget/partnership with LA Metro Magazine. The broad interest in booklets like this mean that they could sell for \$10+ each.
- The city should develop a website for the anniversary and include a FAQ’s listing (online and in print) of key Auburn facts (origin of name, how it became a city, unique assets, famous people, etc)
 - The list of questions could be crowd sourced (asking on Facebook what questions people have about people/places/city)
 - Sun Journal “on this day” feature could be a key resource for the development of this
- The city should consider the creation of a limited run of Cat’s Meow pieces for unique historic buildings in the city (see the Auburn Hall piece recently done) (check lead time and prices). These have been quite popular with collectors and were a staple of the old Gooseberry Barn collector shop on Minot Avenue when it was open.
 - <https://www.catsmeow.com/>
- The city could consider partnering with Morin Brick (comparable to Danville Bicentennial brick fundraiser). Bricks could be engraved and sold as is, or sold to be raised money and be installed in unique assets being built in 2019 (eg. St. Louis Bells tower, New Auburn Riverwalk, etc)
 - <https://www.morinbrick.com/>
- The city should consider having commemorative coins created. Consider a partnership with a local business (Republic Coin, etc) to assist in pre-purchasing and make them an exclusive retailer as part of partnership
- Cooking contest or a cookbook for sale of old family recipes (consider approaching other groups in the city that have managed/sold cookbooks in this format before as a partner)

Distinct physical/lasting projects for potential investment and/or fundraising

Projects planned for construction around the anniversary year may lend themselves to fundraising support from private sources, foundation and/or the federal/state governments

- Updating of Main Street Art Wall
- New Auburn Riverway/Greenway
- St. Louis Bells Project
- Neighborhood welcome/gateway signs (citywide)

- Pedestrian/aesthetic improvements on neighborhood city streets
- All American City banners and/or other seasonal banners for light poles
- Cemetery restoration projects
- Marshall's popcorn truck restoration project
- Digitization of archive materials at partner historical societies/museums

Initial list of potential funding sources for aspects of the anniversary year

- Elks Lodge grants (contact Karen Staples)
- Maine Office of Tourism/Western Maine Lakes and Mountains Region (Dina Jackson, AVCOG)
- Maine Humanities Council
- Maine Historic Preservation Commission
- Corporate sponsors
- City funding (sources and uses to be discussed, with focus on leveraging)

Working groups needed (feedback and volunteers needed)

A large steering committee, given the number of partners, is not likely to be effective. Potential smaller working groups could accomplish targeted tasks to keep the entire event series moving forward with consistency. Those include:

- Stakeholder engagement/coordination: Ensuring event coversheets are completed, historical content reviews are done, and metrics are captured for events
- Marketing/Public Relations/Signage/Banners: Ensuring consistent messaging and overseeing sale of unique products like the souvenir book
- Historic research/reporting: Aiding partner groups and city staff in the accuracy of materials put forward about Auburn's history
- Fundraising/Grantwriting: Name says it all
- Quality Control (recommended as a city staff committee): Ensures that events designated as part of the 150th anniversary year meet with the high standards the public/staff meetings have suggested they should.

Prepared by Jonathan P. LaBonte (March 20, 2018)