

The **Milliken Project** lays out a plan where WCLT and partners (Habitat for Humanity, South End Neighborhood Association and the Quality of Life Committee) work with residents on two streets (Moor and Carrean) in the South End to find ways to increase affordable homeownership, decrease energy consumption, provide opportunities for local youths-to-seniors to earn extra incomes, increase recreational opportunities, decrease food insecurity, and renovate homes while maintaining the historic character of the neighborhood.



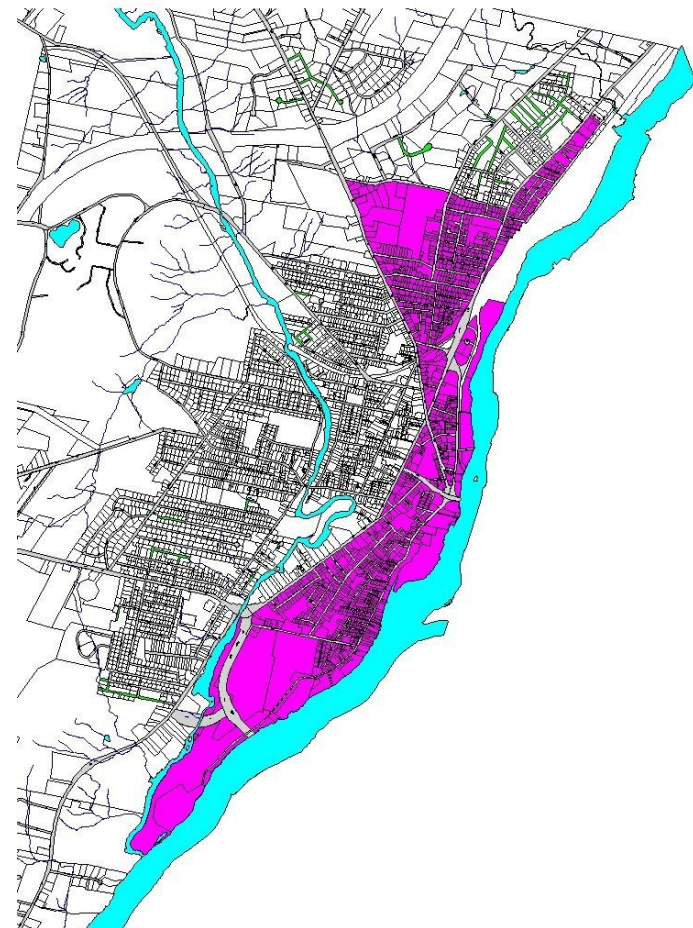
These are ambitious goals. Financial resources are needed if goals are to be reached. The city supported WCLT's application to the U.S. Conference of Mayor's "Community Wins Competition". Should Waterville be chosen, the project would receive \$50,000 or \$75,000. Other funding will be sought from foundations and individuals.

Another opportunity may be the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's "Working Community Challenge". Winning this challenge

would draw even more partners and resources to Waterville's least affluent areas. The below map provides a snapshot of the area for a project in Waterville that would focus on the least affluent populations (purple highlight) in Waterville.

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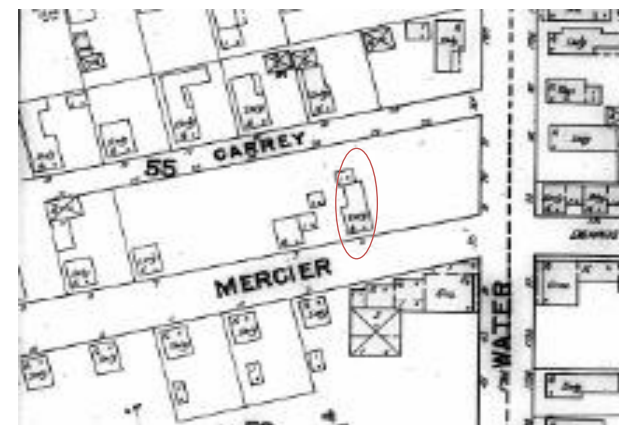
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**Fall/Winter
 2020
 NEWSLETTER**

WCLT's Second Affordable Home Scheduled for Sale by End of Summer

The exterior of WCLT's 3 Moor Street home is nearly complete with only some window trim and painting remaining. We expect to commence renovation inside the home around the beginning of 2021.



3 Moor Street (encircled in red) from Sanborn Insurance Map: 1889

We have researched the home's early history. In 1887 Elizabeth P. Milliken and George Milliken of Bangor sold "lot 8" with house ("numbered 1") to Celestine Labby (Lessard) for \$375. The house was constructed as part of an 1874 plan by Dennis L. Milliken, a Waterville attorney and father of George. The street was called "Mercier" until 1890 when the city named the street "Moor" street after a prominent Waterville family. "Carrey" became "Carrean" Street.

Celestine sold her home to Joseph Cary in 1893.

The house was finally passed to daughter Loretta Cary in 1913 from Joseph Cary, Jr. His father owned a home or store on the adjacent property on Water Street. We don't know much about this family, but we may have their shoes, found hidden inside the walls!



Shoes found at 3 Moor Street

The house appears to have gained its shed by 1889. The large store/home across Mercier Street on the 1889 map is now a children's park, owned by the city. The porch that wrapped around two sides would have been a nice feature to restore



3 Moor: 2020



3 Moor Street: Circa 1935

but, as the house is so close to the road, it seems impractical, particularly during winters. The new porch off the kitchen provides the perfect place to enjoy a morning coffee.

Park on the Kennebec: a Neighborhood Park



Charlie Poulin stopped by to help WCLT install the new fence. (Left to right: Charlie, contractor Doug Kane and his assistant Sam, and WCLT President Paula Saul. Picture by Nancy Williams.)

WCLT's neighborhood Park on the Kennebec is now protected by a post and rail fence. During the summer of 2020 WCLT added two tart cherry trees to the small orchard of apple trees. The patio received more ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers. In the spring a pergola and more benches will be installed. We will be looking for volunteers to help us clear the view of the river.

Our ecologist, Janet McMahon, hired under a generous grant from the Roger N. Heald Fund Maine Community Foundation, has completed her report with recommendations to improve the park for native species, both flora and fauna. Her report highlighted the unique beauty of the silver maple flood-

plain and the importance of this small parcel within a densely developed area. She recommended removal of invasive species, and improvement of the wetland marsh by plugging the current drainage. Her report will be posted on our website.

The agricultural history of the property became apparent during deed research of the 1860's Lashus (LaChance) farm and, finding a 1959 aerial photograph that shows farm barns, chicken sheds (as remembered by local residents), and row crops along the edge of the river's slope.



1959 Soil and Water Conservation Service Aerial (Courtesy of Waterville City Hall)

The Milliken Project and More

Waterville is a great place to live with all of the advantages that a small college town of fewer than 18,000 residents offers. There are restaurants, movie theaters, an opera house, attractive neighborhoods, arts programs, and a highly regarded school system. However, there are neighborhoods within the city that suffer with vacant, abandoned, and poorly maintained homes; families that are rent challenged; high unemployment; high poverty rates; and low homeownership rates.

Waterville has often compared its community metrics with Augusta. Waterville has a lower homeownership rate, higher poverty rate, higher percentage of single parents, lower median home price, lower household income, and a greater number of rent and mortgage burdened residents. Forty-six percent of Waterville residents own their homes while fifty-three percent of Augusta residents own their homes.

The Milliken Project is named for the family that developed a portion of the South End, beginning in the late 19th century. The family built streets and offered lots or lots with constructed homes to mostly those who lived or moved to Waterville to work in the mills on the Kennebec River.

Importance of Homeownership

Unemployed or underemployed families seldom are able to purchase and hold onto homes, the very source of wealth and security for so many Americans. According to 2013 U.S. census data, home equity was 66% of the net worth of people between the ages of 65 and 69; 70% of the net worth of people between the ages of 70 and 74; and 76% of the net worth of people over age 75.

Renters, who have no equity in a home, are unable to use their homes for equity loans or reverse mortgages. Renters lose their homes at a greater rate and more frequency than homeowners lose their homes to foreclosure. They move their families with more frequency. They cannot leave a home to their children, thereby perpetuating generational hardship. Many live with long-term economic instability. All of these trends are documented in WCLT's 'Milliken Project', posted on our website.

Investment In People

One of the lessons learned from neighborhood revitalization projects is that sustainable, positive change may be best when it grows from grassroots activities that give highest priority to the existing residents. Wealthy developers can afford to purchase city blocks but the resultant neighborhoods may not improve the economic outlook for those remaining. Big projects can be built to house families but such projects



too often have become urban blight. Development that raises values of homes also increases assessments and often, taxes, but puts pressure on existing families to move.

How can a city promote improvements, while at the same time protect the needs of the existing residents? That, we submit, is the job of nonprofits, working with the city. Nonprofits seek the opinions and needs of residents and generate projects to achieve those goals. If a project can be successful for one small segment of our community, it could serve as a model for others.