

CHAPTER THREE: OVERVIEW OF UPDATED INVENTORIES

J. Part 2: Arts and Culture

- Despite multiple joint arts and culture planning efforts over the past 12 years, neither the City of Saco nor the City of Biddeford have committed to promoting arts and culture as a means to drive economic development.
- Saco has a pleasant walkable downtown – something many communities envy - but there are few gathering places or green spaces in or near downtown.
- The Riverwalk seems to be somewhat underutilized and may need improvements and more promotion via maps, apps, and wayfinding.
- The Dyer Library and the Saco Museum could offer more cultural programs and events if additional funding were made available. Their location on Main Street would help make new events even more visible to passersby.
- With more housing appearing in the downtown neighborhoods (such as the Notre Dame church redevelopment and Mill Building #4) Saco has an opportunity to engage those “feet on the street” and keep them attending local events, visiting downtown shops, and eating locally.
- Saco Main Street is the main promoter of downtown events. According to the Bridge 2025 report, Saco residents cherish their city’s events and seem eager for more. The City may want to explore partnering with Saco Main Street to bring additional events to the downtown.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNITY GOALS AND POLICIES

J. Part 2 – Arts and Culture

State Goal: There isn't one.

Local Goal: To foster and encourage arts and culture in the City of Saco as an additional way to boost economic development.

Pursuant to this goal, the City's policies with respect to arts and culture are:

1. The City should look for opportunities to create green spaces/pocket parks with seating within and near the downtown and enhance its streetscape with plantings and trees.
2. The City should make necessary improvements to the Riverwalk to expand its use and then promote it.
3. The City should work with the Dyer Library and Saco Museum to increase funding so that event programming and services can be expanded.
4. The City should continue to collaborate with Saco Main Street to promote the downtown and work together to plan more events.
5. The City should use the 2006 Twin Cities Cultural Plan and the Bridge 2025 report as guides for encouraging arts and culture in ways that suit Saco.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Policy Reference	Activity	Primary Responsibility
J.2.1.	<p>Explore the following possibilities for public green space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City-owned spaces in or near downtown • Dyer Library’s green space is already nicely shaded but could use benches and a path • Areas along the Riverwalk closer to downtown or on Saco Island • Brownfield property in or near downtown 	Council, P&DD
J.2.1	Apply to Project Canopy for funding to bolster Saco’s street tree program	Council, P&DD, PWD
J.2.2.	<p>Consider improving the Riverwalk in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place wayfinding signs at intervals and points of decision, including the corner of Beach Street and Hall Avenue and on Front Street. The Front Street park by the dam should also have a sign. • Improve the portion of the trail along the riverbank. Widening and surface work could be done gradually over time • Add signs indicating public parking at the end of Hall Avenue is allowed in order to access the Riverwalk and consider installing a solar-powered streetlight on one of the utility poles there. • Place benches at intervals or scenic spots • Add a kiosk or two along the Riverwalk with information on wildlife, fish and historical aspects • Invite artists to display artwork at certain points and at certain times along the Riverwalk – could become an event (see activity below). 	Council, P&DD, Parks and Rec Dept.

Policy Reference	Activity	Primary Responsibility
J.2.2., J.2.4	<p>Promote the Riverwalk, ways to do that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a map that can be downloaded from the City’s website • Create an app – consider adding historic facts or information about the natural world that users can access interactively as they travel the Riverwalk • Partner with Saco Main Street and develop an event that includes the Riverwalk, possibly involving lighting and/or art. Examples of other towns that have riverwalks/waterfront parks and events in them abound (e.g. Ipswich Illumination, Providence’s WaterFire, Hartford’s Riverfront Recapture etc.). • Install a live cam of the river along the Riverwalk – possibly at the Front Street park or other scenic location and allow access from the City’s website. • Feature the Riverwalk as part of the Biddeford-Saco Art Walks • Hold a race that includes all or a portion of the Riverwalk within its course 	Council, Saco Main Street, P&DD, Parks and Rec Dept.
J.2.3.	<p>Work with the Executive Director and Board of Trustees to augment the funding of the Dyer Library/Saco Museum for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded programming • Membership in MINERVA • Maintenance and improvements to the buildings to accommodate more visitors and increased programming 	Council, Dyer Library/Saco Museum Executive Director and Board of Trustees
J.2.4., J.2.5	<p>Explore additional ways that the City and Saco Main Street can work together to promote Saco’s downtown using the Twin Cities Cultural Plan and Bridge 2025 as a starting point, perhaps hold a workshop once or twice a year.</p>	Council, Saco Main Street

Policy Reference	Activity	Primary Responsibility
J.2.4	Continue to explore opportunities to partner with Biddeford when doing so will promote and improve arts/culture as Saco defines them in Saco's downtown.	Council, P&DD