

CREATING A COOPERATIVE FARM-TO-TABLE RESTAURANT IN LEWISTON

NOVEMBER 28, 2017

BATES COLLEGE ANTHROPOLOGY 339 PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION

FOR

THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS RELIEF ORGANIZATION (SLRO)

AND

THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (CDI)

AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF

THE HARVARD CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (HCCP)

Professor Eames' Introduction

When Sam Boss of the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships at Bates College suggested last August that my comparative economics class could partner with the Cooperative Development Institute (CDI) and a group of Somali Bantu Farmers (SLRO) in support of the creation of a farm-to-table cooperative restaurant and market, I was very enthused indeed. Every year I try some sort of Community Engaged Learning in my junior/senior Anthropology seminar called *Production and Reproduction (AN339)*. The project they proposed would resonate well with a multitude of course themes, such as resource allocation, labor mobilization, production for subsistence vs. production for the market, the impact of the invention of money and wages, community cooperation, social enterprise, reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange, just to name a few.

The first week of the term, under the auspices of the College's Purposeful Work initiative, we had both Jonah Fertig and Mohamed Dekow in class, then a few weeks later a group of SLRO farmers along with some MIRS leaders came to class—along with a lot of delicious food! During that meeting, each student volunteered to work on one of four topics: P.R.; Location; Farm-to-Table practices in Maine; Local ethnic restaurant comparisons. They were to consult with their community partners as they went along. Let's see how it all turned out. We begin with executive summaries by each group and then proceed to the fully detailed report.

Promotion Group's Executive Summary

Daniel, Joshua, and Owen

Our group's job was to begin to formulate a strategy for promoting the farm to table restaurant to the general public. After researching websites and social media outlets of other similar restaurants in the Lewiston-Auburn area, we understand that there are five key ways to publicize a restaurant. Forming a website, creating a presence on social media outlets such as a Twitter and/or a Facebook page, distributing physical promotional menus, gaining advertisements in the Sun Journal and The Bates Student that emphasize the story of the restaurant, and using the promotional advertisement video we have produced, all are strategies we suggest as ideal methods of promotion for the restaurant.

Location Group's Executive Summary

Jade, Jamie, Keenan, Madeline

- 210 Blake Street is financially feasible, has a central location, and already has a kitchen facility, but parking is limited
- The best way to look at other locations would be to hire a real estate broker that specializes in restaurant properties

- Specific licensing, inspections, and fees are required at both state and city levels in order to operate a restaurant, including:
 - Department of Health and Human Services License (State)
 - Class D Business License (City)
- Demographic summary (intersection of three census tracts):
 - Low median household income
 - Low rate of owner-occupied housing units (it is difficult to get accurate socioeconomic and demographic information of renters)

Farm-To-Table Group's Executive Summary

Cassidy, Ellie, Carley

By visiting and looking into multiple farm-to-table restaurants and cafes, we have put together information to understand how these establishments operate. Locally, we looked at *Local Sprouts* (Portland), *Nezinscot Farm* (Turner), and *The Well at Jordan's Farm* (Cape Elizabeth). We found that some farm-to-table restaurants function as cafes and others as more formal sit down restaurants. Each establishment has an inviting and community-oriented atmosphere, as they each are founded on a similar principle of bringing local food to a local community. There also seemed to be a variation in the degree to which the restaurant was involved with the community and community related events.

International Restaurants Group's Executive Summary

Isa, Sarah, Charlotte, Matthew, Nadja

Our group was assigned with researching the different components of international restaurants in terms of their aesthetic and logistics. Our process included traditional research as well as conversations over meals at restaurants in Lewiston with a few members of the SLRO co-op. Though we have general findings and suggestions, we are mainly here to see what all of you want. Thus we've structure this presentation in a way to direct you towards what questions to ask yourselves in order to take these next steps.

- 1. What style of music are you interested in playing, if any?**
- 2. What do you want hanging on your walls?**
- 3. How do you want to fill up the floor space? Smaller tables or "family style"?**
- 4. Do you prefer to have an open kitchen or a closed kitchen?**
- 5. Would you rather have sit-down or counter service?**
- 6. Will you take reservations?**
- 7. Will you consider catering?**
- 8. Will you consider take-out?**
- 9. Will you consider delivery?**
- 10. Will you serve all day breakfast, lunch, and dinner or if not, which combination?**
- 11. Can you think of a favorite beverage that could be popular at the restaurant?**
- 12. Will you serve desserts?**
- 13. What do you want the menu to look like?**
- 14. What story do you want your restaurant to tell?**
- 15. How will you combine the Somali Bantu origin with the cooperative farm to table structure in order to create a unique dining experience?**

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Promotion

Joshua Hunt, Owen Warren, and Daniel Kornacki

Promotions Group's Executive Summary

Our group's job was to begin to formulate a strategy for the promotion of a farm to table restaurant to the general public. After researching websites and social media outlets of other similar restaurants in the Lewiston-Auburn area, we understand that there are five key ways to publicize a restaurant. Forming a website, creating social media outlets such as a Twitter and/or a Facebook page, distributing physical promotional menus, gaining advertisements in the Sun Journal and The Bates Student that emphasize the story of the restaurant, and using the promotional advertisement video we have produced, all are strategies we suggest as ideal methods of promotion for the restaurant.

Methods of Promotion

- Website
 - After researching several local restaurants situated in Lewiston, we found that websites play an important role in providing information on the restaurant and creating a brand.
 - The website should include information such as menu, location, contact details, and, particularly for the co-op, sections on the backstory and ethos of the project.

- Social Media
 - Alongside the website, a significant social media presence should be established as a more casual and personal source of information and a point of access between the co-op and customers.
 - As well as having the bulk of information on the website, the social media page should share special offers and events, as well as providing a way to order take-out or reserve tables online.
 - A Facebook and Twitter page, with consistent branding, are recommended - a potential Kickstarter page could be promoted on these platforms.
 - We also suggest an email listserv be created to not only keep people up to date with the progress of the restaurant in order to build a relationship, but also as a way to send discounts and offers once the restaurant is better established.

- Physical Promotion
 - Leaflets and menus should be distributed in several local communities to build the restaurant's presence at a household level.
 - We envision leaflets and menus being delivered to households in Lewiston, including Bates dorms - currently, local restaurants such as Pure Thai and Mother India have menus on each Bates dorm's notice board which situates them as key restaurants in Lewiston for students.
 - Advertisement space should also be purchased in local publications, such as The Sun Journal and The Bates Student.
 - It would be ideal if free promotion could be gained from pitching the story of the restaurant as an article idea with interviews from members of the co-op, rather than directly buying an advertisement.

We Created a Short Promotional Video for you to use



The promotional video we created can be downloaded from this link:

<https://vimeo.com/244762789>

- Uses of the video
 - We anticipate that the video will largely be used to add a visual and aesthetic element, rather than the video itself being the main source of information, to other means of promotion to personalize and give faces and voices to the project.
 - We would recommend the video to be featured on any Kickstarter page (with the bulk of relevant information about the project being in the text below), all social media pages (videos can be pinned to the top of profiles on both Facebook and Twitter), and on the website (most likely on the front page or in the *About* section).

- Moving forward
 - We would like to provide the co-op with the stock footage of the video as well as a textless version so the video can be repurposed for different means, such as announcements of opening dates and other progressions.
 - With regards to establishing our suggested promotion ideas, we are eager to help implement them once a brand becomes clearer and more information is ready to be publicly available.

Report on Location Research

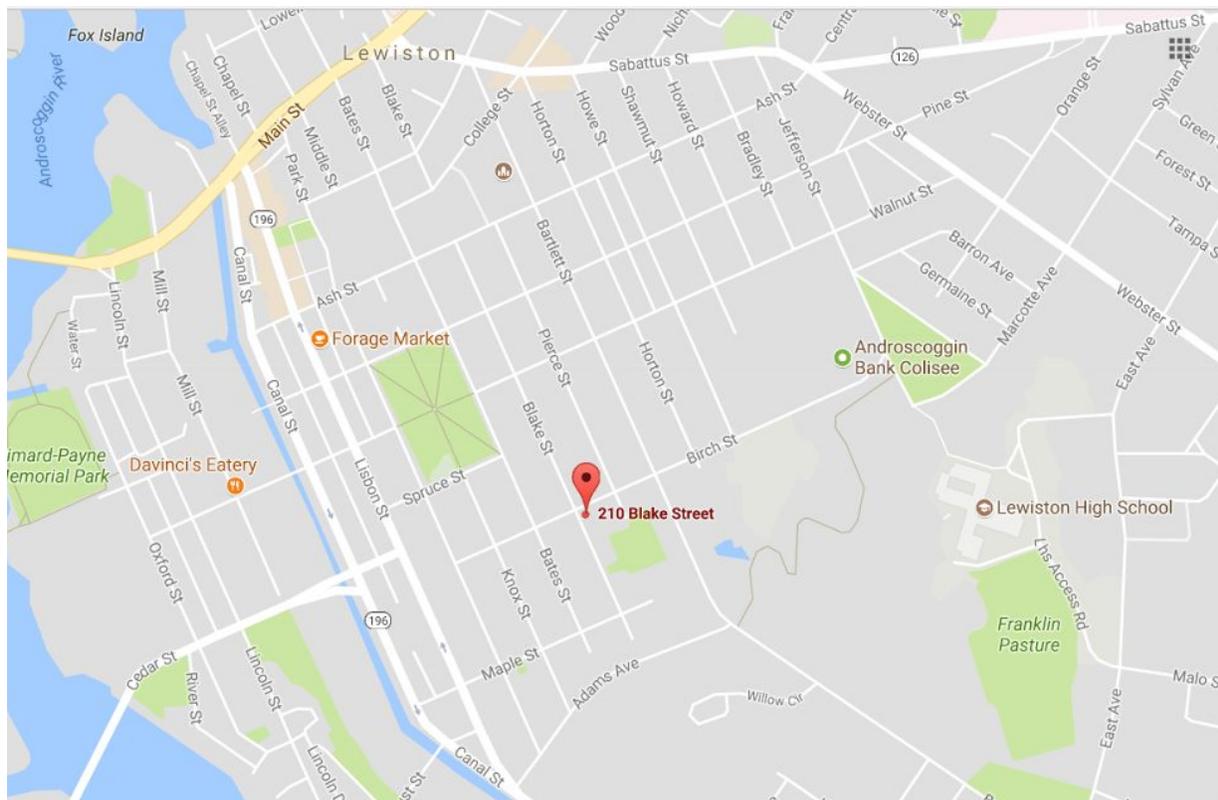
Jamie Kelleher, Jade Donaldson, Keenan Shields, and Madeline McGonagle
November 28, 2017



Summary of Advantages and Disadvantages of the Proposed Location

The proposed location for the restaurant is 210 Blake St. The property, currently Global Market, is situated at the corner of Blake and Birch Streets. This location has three key advantages. First, it has a furnished industrialized kitchen. Not having to install an entire industrial kitchen will greatly reduce the overhead cost of opening the restaurant. Of course, some important changes and renovations might have to be made, but those should be much less expensive than starting from scratch. Second, we learned that some members of SLRO have a positive relationship with Global Market's current owner. This relationship will undoubtedly aid in the negotiations stage of the transition process. Finally, 210 Blake St. is an incredibly centralized location and should draw a wide range of potential customers. Using Google Maps, we estimated travel times from important nearby locations:

- 0.3 miles from Kennedy Park — 6 minute walking distance
- 0.5 miles from Lisbon St. — 10 minute walking distance
- 0.2 miles from Longley Elementary School — 4 minute walking distance
- 0.7 miles from Lewiston High School — 14 minute walking distance
- 0.3 miles from Colisee — 6 minute walking distance
- 1.2 miles from Bates College — 24 minute walking distance; 5 minutes by car



The principal disadvantage of this location is that parking is confined to the street. Depending on the time of day and the weather, this might be limited and potentially unavailable. One possible solution is to pitch the restaurant as less of a formal sit-down establishment and encourage customers to walk there, which would limit the need for large amounts of parking. We think the parking situation is fine but recommend cross-referencing your intended audience and style of dining with specific parking requirements.

Neighborhood Demographic Information

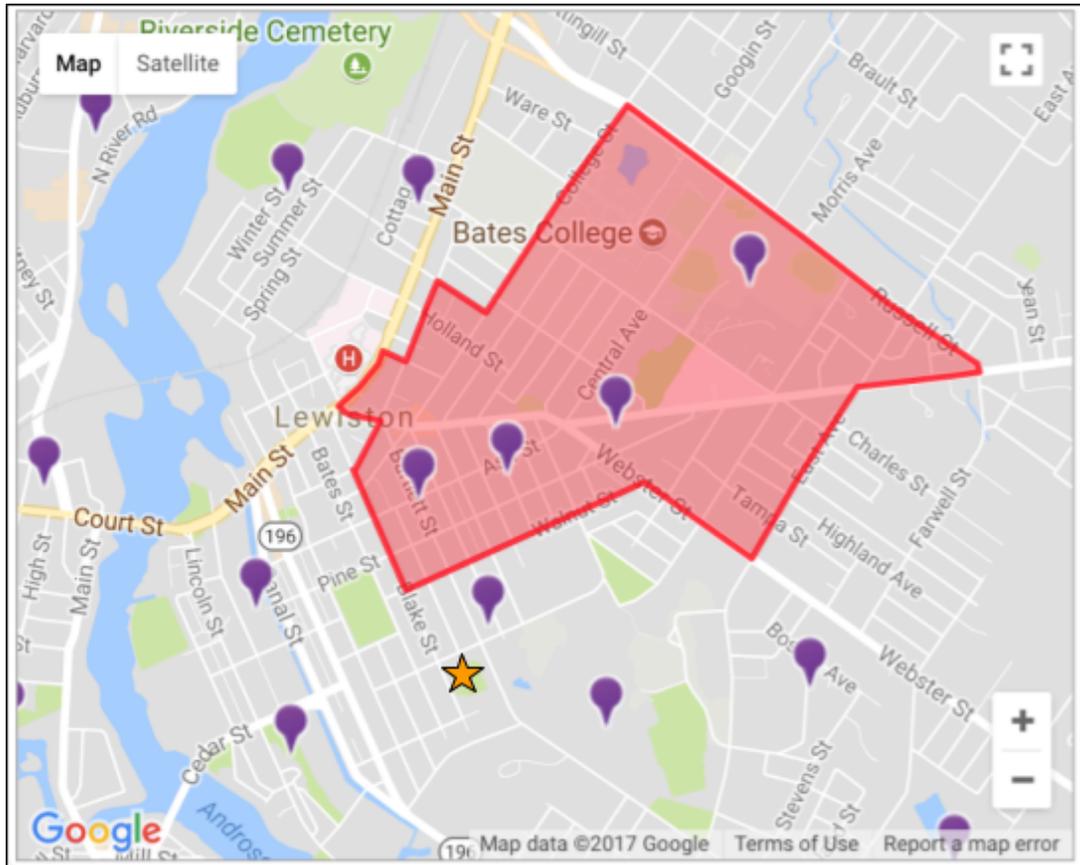
This section includes information we compiled from the US Census, County Business Patterns (CBP), and Annual Community Surveys (ACS). All of this data is collected and released by the US Census Bureau. CBP are annually produced and provide detailed geographic, industry, and other data for US business establishments. The ACS is a nationwide survey that produces demographic, social, housing, and economic estimates for small areas. We believe this data may be helpful for deciding on the aesthetic and pricing of the restaurant. However, these data are slightly outdated and things may have changed in the neighborhood since it all was collected. Thus, these statistics may be helpful but should be considered with some skepticism.

Census Tract Demographics (from 2013 ACS and 2012 CBP)

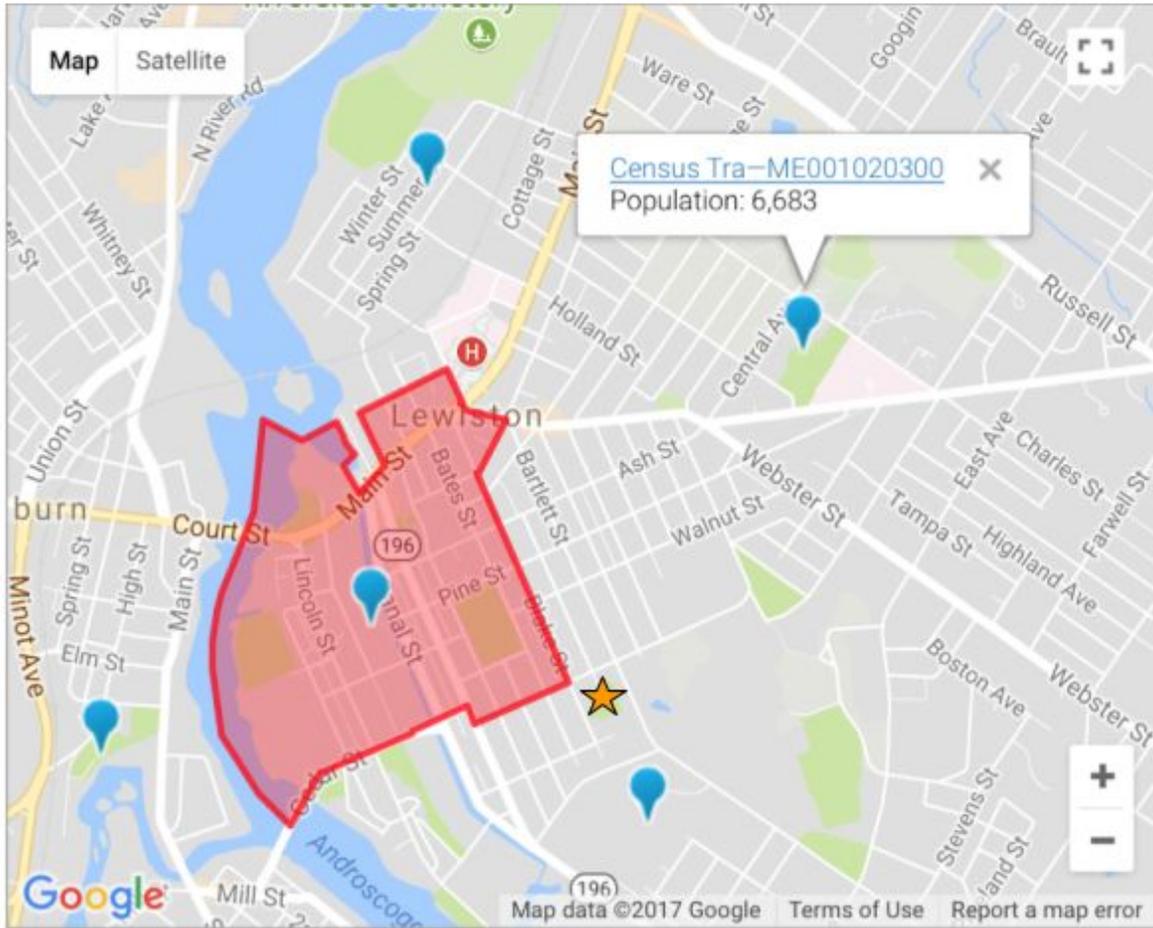
Three census tracts converge around the Blake-Birch St. corner. This is the demographic information for each. Reference maps are attached below.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Census Tract 201</i>	<i>Census Tract 203</i>	<i>Census Tract 204</i>
Total Population	1,430	7,355	2,910
65+ (%)	17.1	14.6	7.8
Foreign Born (%)	8.3	6.2	7.2
Part of Labor Force (%)	44.6	54.9	46.9
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Industry Workers (%)	6	5.4	2.5
Owner occupied housing units (%)	1.8	12.9	16.2
Median Household Income	\$13,117	\$12,943	\$16,837

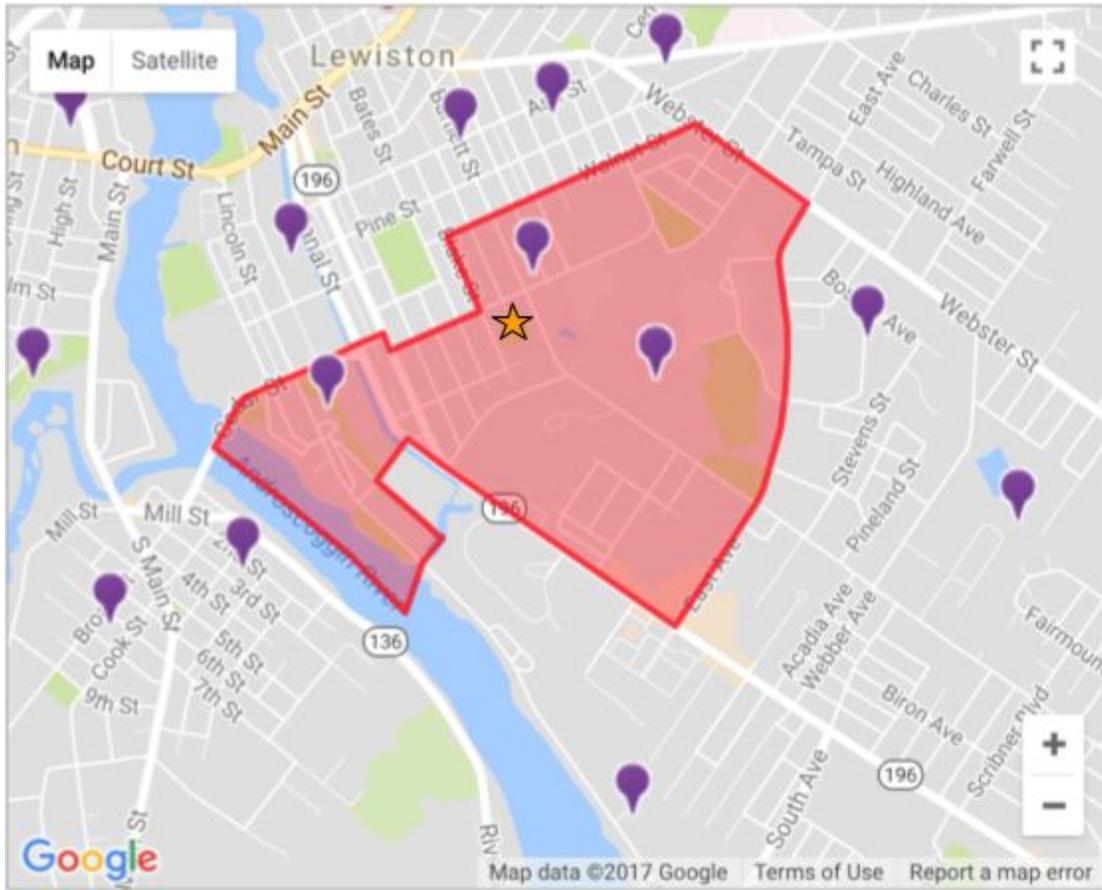
Census Tract 20100



Census Tract 20300



Census Tract 20400



Demographics of Ten-Block Radius Around Location (From Census and ACS)

In the table below, we have averaged the racial demographics within a ten-block radius around 210 Blake Street. This includes Census Blocks 1027, 1028, 1029, 2000, 3001, 3002, 3003, 3004, 3005, and 3006. This information was gathered from the Justice Map, which maps data from the Census Bureau, including results from the 2010 Census and the 2011-2015 ACS.

American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Islander	White	Non-White	Multiracial
0.137%	0.574%	44.79%	3.32%	0.066%	44.92%	53.51%	4.31%

Licensing and Fees

In order to own and operate a restaurant in Lewiston, there are certain licensing requirements at both the state and city level.

The State of Maine requires the [Health Inspection Program Application](#). Submitting this application will schedule an appointment for a State Health Inspector to visit the restaurant site to conduct a pre-operational inspection. The Health Inspector will inform the Licensing Clerk to issue the license within 30 days of application approval. After the Health Inspector completes your inspection and you have been given approval to operate, you may operate the business even before you have received your official license. The inspection and licensing cost is a flat rate of \$60 per year and must be renewed every year. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) coordinates this certification. You can reach the application website from the above link or see the Reference List below.

The application for a pre-operational inspection asks for your organization to produce business owner information, a business proposal, a copy of a water test for the building (if the water supply is well water), a copy of septic system's design (if you are not on public sewer system), provisions for food prep and storage, a menu, and a floor plan.

In addition to a health inspection your restaurant must be in compliance with the following:

- Maine Food Code
- Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules
- Drinking Water Rules
- Life Safety Code
- Internal Plumbing Rules
- Fire Marshal's Office

Given the complexity of these regulations and the present stage of planning, we have opted to suggest further references instead of summarizing the necessary requirements. We determined these applications require a situational approach and since much is yet to be determined, we're hesitant to attempt specificity. The necessary websites are noted below in the Reference List.

The City of Lewiston requires a Class D Business License to operate a restaurant in the city. Class D indicates that your establishment will serve food, but does not include a liquor license. If you wish to serve alcohol, that would require an additional licensing process. Applications can only be obtained at City Hall. They must be signed off by Lewiston Fire Department and the Lewiston Code Enforcement Office. The licensing fee is \$150 and must be renewed each year. The yearly fee is paid in April or May each year. If you pay for the license between May 31st and November 1st you will still pay the full-year fee. If you pay for the year anytime between November 1st and April 1st the fee is prorated to a half-year fee of \$75.

One suggestion that came up repeatedly in our research on opening a restaurant is to know the exact parameters of the project. Not knowing these can result in large amounts of wasted time and resources. For example, one can waste a large amount of time researching properties that are not suited for being restaurants or are not well situated to handle customers. Without a concrete and specific understanding of what your organization wants, a lot of your research and work, particularly on determining a location and meeting the requisite City and State requirements, may lead to dead ends. To efficiently sort through a large number of available properties, it helps to know the city's codes. Several sources recommended contacting the city planning department to find out about the specific requirements on parking per square foot of restaurant space, zoning restrictions, and any other regulations. We have included the link to the City of Lewiston Ordinance website in the Reference List.

Pricing Estimates

We attempted to estimate the expected pricing for the property. Professor Eames went to City Hall and got copies of the public records for the 210 Blake Street property which broke down the recent valuation of the land and the building (see table below). Using this information, we calculated, conservatively, what a thirty-year mortgage at 5% would cost for this property (see table below). Next, we found three other more expensive properties currently on the market and applied the same hypothetical mortgage rate. We understand SLRO is more interested in renting than buying the property, nevertheless, we thought comparing the property values to other similar properties would be helpful.

Property	Sale price	Mortgage (5% for 30 years)
210 Blake Street	\$95,920	\$185,371 total, \$515 monthly
81 College Street	\$139,280	\$269,167 total, \$748 monthly
339 Lisbon Street*	\$175,000	\$339,198 total, \$939 monthly
40 Lisbon Street	\$350,000	\$676,395 total, \$1,879 monthly

We were unable to estimate the amount of rent you could expect to pay at 210 Blake Street. We found that a retail property on Main Street was charging rent per square foot per year.

Property	Found Rent per Square Foot/Year
280 Main Street (950 square feet)*	\$13.89 (\$1,099/month)

*Denotes non-restaurant but commercial properties -- included for property-value reference.

81 College Street (restaurant property)



40 Lisbon Street (restaurant property)



Other Options:

If the current plan to rent the 210 Blake Street property is not feasible, here is what we can recommend from our research.

OPTION 1: HIRE A REAL ESTATE DEALER

The best “Plan B” is to hire a commercial real estate broker who specializes in restaurant-specific properties to help you find another location. A real estate broker can research properties, make recommendations from extensive experience, and help negotiate better arrangements with landlords and their brokers/lawyers. Furthermore, real estate brokers can save time, money, and provide industry knowledge that is not publicly available.

Letter of Intent (LOI)

When making an initial offer on a property (either to rent or buy), a letter of intent is helpful in outlining the major points that you want included in the lease agreement. This will eventually turn into a formal lease, or agreement between the owner of the property and the renter. This letter should include address, space and facility requirements for the business, term

of lease and rent, business model, list of products and/or services of the business, lease and rent commencement, and a schedule to set up meetings. Once the initial LOI is sent and conversation between the owner and the renter begins it will become important to decide what alterations (if any) can be made to the property, if there are options to extend lease, and what the triple net lease entails (property taxes, property insurance, and common area maintenance). The LOI is meant to both establish a relationship with the owner of the property as well as maintain the owner-renter relationship throughout the lease period.

Negotiating and Signing a Lease Agreement

From our research, we learned that typically once your group and the landlord you are interested in renting with share an LOI, the landlord will prepare a draft lease that you will review together. The lease will include all of the terms outlined in the LOI with additional legal language covering many more items that are typically not discussed during the LOI stage. Lease agreements range from just a few pages to more than 150 pages in length. If you addressed the major business and economic issues thoroughly during the LOI stage, the legal issues in the lease can usually be worked through. Lease negotiations can take anywhere from a few days to a month. Lease negotiations are either handled directly between the landlord and the tenant (sometimes with the broker or agent as the middleman) or between the landlord's attorney and tenant's attorney. Final lease agreements will be prepared for signature once all terms have been agreed upon by both parties.

The landlord or landlord's agent or attorney will either send hard copies for signature to the tenant or arrange for both parties to meet and sign together. You can expect to sign two to four copies depending on how many parties were involved in the transaction. The landlord, tenant and brokers if any, each receive a fully signed copy for their records. At this time you will deliver a cashier's check made to the landlord for the first month's rent, NNN and security deposit. In addition, the landlord will require you to provide proof of liability insurance naming the landlord as the "additional insured." You should arrange insurance during the lease negotiation period.

Receiving the Space

If the space is vacant and the landlord is not responsible for any work prior to delivery of the premises, you may receive the keys when you sign the lease. If the premises will be delivered at a later time, arrangements will be made to deliver the premises. It is a good idea to utilize an amendment such as a Letter of Lease Commencement so there are no discrepancies about the start date of the lease.

OPTION 2: TARGET SPECIFIC PROPERTIES

If you would prefer not to use a Commercial Real-Estate dealer and instead search for a property directly, here's what you need to know:

You may find a property by looking at spaces that are leased for restaurant use. You should try contacting the planning department for Lewiston to verify which zoning permits restaurants use. Most commercial areas should allow restaurant use, but certain neighborhoods may have additional restrictions.

Prior to starting your search, you should determine if you are only looking for existing

2nd generation space or if you will build your own restaurant from a raw space. It would be easier to buy a 2nd generation space, or a space already being used as a restaurant. The benefits of this include:

- Possibility to acquire below-market lease or less restrictive liquor license
- Time to open can be significantly reduced
- Layout is efficient
- Condition of equipment is known
- Greater ability to negotiate lease terms with landlord

When you find a space that you would like to pursue, you should open conversation with the current tenant or landlord of the restaurant space. You can then negotiate a future lease with the landlord for when the current lease expires. You should be aware that this can be a very time-consuming process and requires the patience to possibly wait months or years into the future for a specific site.

Reference List

Census Block Demographic Information —

<https://www.census.gov/censusexplorer/censusexplorer.html>

Demographics of 10 Block Radius Around the Location —

http://www.justicemap.org/index.php?gsLayer=income_block&gfLon=-70.21033792&gfLat=44.09528995&giZoom=15&gsSize=tract&giAdvanced=1&

Health Inspection Program Application — Available at the link below under “Eating & Lodging License Application (HHE-602). Obtain a hard copy or ask questions by calling the Health Inspection Program at 207-287-5671.

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/el/forms.htm#eating>

Maine Food Code, Laws, and Rules —

http://www.maine.gov/dacf/qar/laws_and_rules/food_laws_rules.shtml

Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules —

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/documents/SubsurfaceWastewaterDisposalRulesProposal.pdf>

Drinking Water Rules —

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/pws/rulesPolicies.shtml>

Relevant Web Pages from the Maine Fire Marshal's Office:

- Life Safety Code — <http://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/laws/rules.html>
- Inspections, see Assembly Occupancy Regulations — <http://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/inspections/assembly.html>
- Plans Review Division — <http://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/plans/index.html>
- Fire Sprinklers — <http://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/sprinklers/index.html>

Internal Plumbing Rules —

http://www.maine.gov/decd/meocd/ceo/publications/plumbing_permit_fees.pdf

City of Lewiston Business License information —

<http://www.lewistonmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/467>

City of Lewiston Ordinance Website — <http://www.lewistonmaine.gov/index.aspx?nid=114>

Restaurant Real Estate Advisors — This was the primary source we used for recommendations on what to do if 210 Blake Street does not work out. It offers fairly comprehensive and understandable advice on how to build a restaurant business plan and find a location.

<https://restaurantrealestateadvisors.com/>

We include a couple useful links to specific topics they cover below

- [How to choose a restaurant broker](#)
- [What restaurant owners ought to know about real estate brokers](#)
- [Important pieces of a restaurant business plan](#)
- [Common area expenses \(CAM/NNN\)](#)
- [How to determine the right rent for a restaurant](#)
- [What is a Letter of Intent \(LOI\)](#)
- [Assignment Rights](#)

Understanding your “trade area” -

<https://restaurantrealestateadvisors.com/what-trade-area-quick-service-restaurant/>

Commercial real-estate properties in Lewiston —

<http://www.loopnet.com/Maine/Lewiston-Commercial-Real-Estate/>

<http://www.rofo.com/ME/Lewiston>

<https://www.themainerealestatenetwork.com/lewiston-maine-real-estate/lewiston-me-commercial-opportunities/>

FARM-TO-TABLE RESTAURANTS

Caroline Barnes, Cassidy McCarns, Ellie Pugmilia

Farm to Table Restaurant Group's Executive Summary:

By visiting and looking into multiple farm-to-table restaurants and cafes, we have put together information to understand how these establishments operate. Locally, we looked at Local Sprouts (Portland), Nezinscot Farm (Turner), and The Well at Jordan's Farm (Cape Elizabeth). We found that some farm-to-table restaurants function as cafes and others as more formal sit down restaurants. Each restaurant has an inviting and community oriented atmosphere, as they each are founded on a similar principle of bringing local food to a local community. There also seemed to be a variation in the degree in which the restaurant was involved with the community and community related events.

PLACES WE LOOKED AT:

Local Sprouts (Portland, ME)

Nezinscot (Turner, ME)

The Well at Jordan's Farm (Cape Elizabeth, ME)

9 Miles East Farm (Saratoga Springs, NY)

WHAT WE FOUND:

Overall:

Places tended to be cafe style restaurants that offered customers a more casual dining experience. This counter service allowed customers to order at the counter and choose where they wanted to sit. The food would be prepared and brought out to them. This is an alternative experience to a sit-down restaurant where one's order is taken at the table.

Individual Aspects:

Nezinscot:

- Cafe, Breakfast and Lunch
- Located on the Farm
- Counter Service
- Market/Store
- Work Accessible, Free Wifi

Local Sprouts:

- Cafe, Breakfast and Lunch
- Located in Downtown Portland
- Counter Service
- Multi-functional space
- Work Accessible, Free Wifi
- Local Food, Local Community

The Well at Jordan's Farm:

- Sit down dinner, table service
- Menu changes- dependent on ingredients
- Food made to order
- Only open in the summer
- Reservations required
- More formal
- Set on the site of the farm
- Picnic tables or private gazebos
- Community events

9 Miles East Farm (Saratoga Springs, NY)

- Home meal delivery service
- Can order one time or subscribe to receiving delivery each week
- Cater to local businesses
- Sell pre-made meal-boxes in local markets
- No store-front space
- Change the menu each week

TAKE AWAYS:

- Counter service allowed for a more casual dining experience
- Free Wifi made the space accessible for people to do work with having a meal
- The space can be multi-purpose and host various events to the local community
 - Events can be concerts, art shows, gatherings of the community
- The Well at Jordan's Farm was a more formal dining experience
 - The restaurant recommends reservations
- A counter service can offer lower prices than a sit down restaurant
- A counter service can be a quicker dining experience
- The difference between some of the farm-to-table restaurants we looked at and this business is that the restaurant at Nezinscot and the Well are both located on the farm. Local Sprouts is spatially removed from the farm in a separate space
- Mission Statements/Vision
 - Each farm-to-table restaurant had a mission statement that explained their vision as a farm-to-table restaurant. These mission statements can be one sentence statements or expand into describing the values and goals in operating a farm-to-table restaurant.
Think: What makes a farm-to-table restaurant different than other establishments? What dining experience will your customers have? What values are important to you in having a farm-to-table restaurant?

Mission Statement Examples:

Nezinscot:

“Creating a memory and experience that only farms can.”

Local Sprouts:

“Local Sprouts is a worker-owned cooperative that provides local and organic food and holistic learning through cooking food for our community. We strive to be leaders in a more just and sustainable food and service economy with the intention of creating a non-exploitative workplace by hosting an anti-oppressive, accessible space for our community and our workers.”

The Well:

“Everybody deserve to eat well.”

9 Miles East:

“We’re here to make it easy to eat local food.”

INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANTS IN LEWISTON

Observations, Tips, and Discussion Questions on Logistics for your Restaurant

Isa Barrengos, Charlotte Cutshall, Sarah Freyd, Nadja Steiner, and Matthew Winter

Executive Summary

Our group was assigned with researching the different components of international restaurants in terms of their aesthetic and logistics. Our process included traditional research as well as conversations over meals at restaurants in Lewiston with a few members of the SLRO co-op. Though we have general findings and suggestions, we are mainly here to see what all of you want. Thus we've structured this presentation as a way of directing you towards what questions to ask yourselves in order to take these next steps.

Aesthetics: we considered the style of the restaurants we visited, taking into account music, decorations, seating and kitchen layout.

Music: Mother India had Bollywood music playing while Pure Thai had very quiet, ambient music. **What style of music are you interested in playing, if any?**

Decorations: Mother India had colorful walls with photographs of attractions in India featured as well as overhead light features, while Pure Thai had white walls with national flags and photographs on display, along with overhead lighting. **What style or perspective would you like in the restaurant? What do you want hanging on your walls? Paintings or photographs?**

Seating: Mother India and Pure Thai both had a sit-down style with servers. Mother India filled up most of its space with rows of tables with the register at the back of the space. Pure Thai had more spaced out seating along the wall with the register at the front by the door. **How do you want to fill up the floor space? Do you want smaller tables or "family style"?**

Kitchen Layout: Mother India had a closed kitchen while Pure Thai had an open kitchen. **Do you prefer to have an open kitchen or a closed kitchen?**

Service: We've seen that good service is very important when it comes to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Here are some notes from our research. Customers want integrity, reliability/dependability, consistency, and timeliness/predictability. Better service makes the food taste better. Service quality includes: food comes exactly as ordered, service is quick, employees can answer questions well, employees are friendly with customers. There's a lot of details to work out when establishing your service--will the restaurant be sit down or counter service? Will you take reservations? Will you cater? Will you have take-out? Both Mother India and Pure Thai had sit-down service. **Would you rather have sit-down or counter service?**

Reservations: Mother India takes reservations but Pure Thai does not. **Will you take reservations?**

Catering: Both Mother India and Pure Thai cater. Bates uses both their catering services often. **Especially since you have informally catered for this class, would you consider catering?**

Take-Out: Both Mother India and Pure Thai do take-out which is a service often used by Bates students. **Will you do take-out?**

Meals: deciding what meals you'll be serving is also a big decision. Both Mother India and Pure Thai are open for lunch and dinner though dinner is probably their more popular meal. **Will you serve breakfast, lunch and dinner or a combination of the three?**

Accompanying the meal: It's also important to think about what else you'll serve aside from the meals. Will you serve dessert? In addition to this, beverages also need to be considered. Pure Thai is popular for its bubble tea while Mother India serves mango lassi as a signature beverage. **Can you think of your favorite beverage that could be popular at the restaurant such as the chai?**

Hours: when you're open is obviously another important decision to make. Below are the hours of a few other popular restaurants in Lewiston.

Pure Thai Hours:

Thursday 11am-9pm, Friday 11am- 10pm, Saturday 11am- 10pm, Sunday 11am-9pm, Monday 11am-9pm, Wednesday 11am-9pm (closed on Tuesdays)

Mother India Hours:

Monday 4:30-9:00pm, Tuesday - Thursday 11:00am-3:00pm and 4:30-9:00pm, Friday - Sunday 11:00am -9:00pm

Boba Hours:

Tuesday - Friday 11am-8pm, Saturday 12 pm-8pm, Sunday 12 pm-7pm (closed on Mondays)

What daily and weekly hours will you keep?

Menu: the menu itself says a lot about your restaurant. Mother India and Pure Thai have similar styles to their menu--laminated and multiple pages.

Some tips on menus from our research:

- In general, many American customers visit ethnic restaurants for *authenticity*
- Generally, customers want to find things in this restaurant that they will rarely find in any other restaurant, so uniqueness is key
- Unfamiliar food names and ingredients will make customers feel like it's more authentic and exciting, while familiar ones will make customers feel bored
- More descriptive food names usually leads to a more positive experience
- Food names that make the food seem healthy and nutritious increase customer satisfaction and raise customer expectation of the food

What do you want the menu to look like? Laminated or paper? One page or multiple?

Pricing: It's difficult to make your food both affordable and good quality. Note that this restaurant is farm to table so you are allowed to ask for a higher price but you still need to make it as accessible as possible. "Cooperatives may offer a middle road: As one co-op manager said, 'we adjust wholesale price to give farmers more than distributors and to give local organic farmers a higher price.' Retailers, both grocers and co-ops, talk about the importance that farmers realize the value that is inherent in this market relationship, the value that is reflected in the predictable wholesale price" (32). Below are the prices for some of the popular dishes at other restaurants in Lewiston.

Mother India

Dinner entrees: Chicken: \$13.95, Lamb: \$16.95, Seafood: \$14.95

Lunch: w/ meat: \$9.95, vegetarian: \$8.95

Breads: \$4.50

All you can eat buffet for \$10.95 Wednesday - Thursday, 11:30am - 2:30pm, and Sunday, \$11.95, 12:00 - 3:00pm

Pure Thai

Dinner entrees: Chicken/Vegetable/Tofu: \$10; Mock Duck/Shrimp/Beef: \$11;

Duck: \$14; Mixed Seafood: \$16

Appetizers: \$4-6

Lunch: Chicken/Vegetable/Tofu: \$6.99; Shrimp/Beef: \$7.99 (comes with an appetizer)

What Customer's from Similar Restaurants Liked

- They loved the enthusiasm of the staff as they shared their culture when serving the food
- They loved how it felt family-run
- Big portion sizes were a hit
- In the end, all the Yelp reviews firstly talk about the food (namely the goat)

Some concluding notes from our research:

- Although the physical environment is important, service and food quality is more important in promoting customer loyalty
- If the budget is tight, focus on service and food quality over the physical environment, as some customers don't mind a "hole-in-the-wall" feel

Some final questions:

What type of "authentic" experience do you want to create? What story do you want your restaurant to tell? How will you combine aspects of Somali Bantu culture with the farm-to-table concept (and maybe the Lewiston/Maine experience) to create a unique restaurant experience?