

# Revitalizing Bangor: Keeping Professionals in Central Maine



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## 1.1 Introduction

Maine faces a demographic crisis; by 2027, it is predicted that there will be only 2.1 workers for each senior over the age of 65 (US Census Bureau & Fralich et al. 2012). The median age of Maine's population is currently the highest in the nation at 43.5 years. This has significant implications for the state's economy. Fewer people will have to support more elderly and retirees. Maine will be deprived of resources when seniors reduce their spending after retirement and fewer professionals exist to pick up the slack. This could threaten the viability of businesses and the jobs they provide. Dwindling class sizes in schools will be followed by shrinking budgets, something that many of Maine's primary schools cannot afford. Less economic activity will encourage more young people and families to look elsewhere for career opportunities, worsening the problem. In many areas of Maine, this trend could be devastating for towns that are already struggling.

To avoid the gauntlet of political and budgetary concerns that accompanies this age distribution, Maine must find ways of attracting and retaining people who will comprise the future workforce. Cities and states throughout the country have been pursuing various "revitalization" policies in an effort to invigorate their economies and attract more people to their respective areas. Bangor serves as the epicenter for urban activity in the central region of the state. More than ten percent of Maine's population lives in the Bangor metropolitan area, and the city accounts for a significant portion of the region's employment. Bangor is a hub for business, education, and recreation, making it a prime location for bringing in young workers and professionals who are looking to develop a career and make a home in Maine.

This project will explore the factors that make a region a desirable place to settle. What things do recent college graduates value most when deciding where to go after graduation? What attractions or features (physical or otherwise) bring young professionals to a city? How do these

attitudes change over time? Which of these features exist in Bangor, and which are absent or need improving? Furthermore, we will analyze community engagement in Bangor and the role it potentially plays in enhancing the quality of life of Bangor's residents and success of its businesses. Finally, the project will involve collaboration with local officials and community members to develop realistic policy strategies that may be implemented to energize the local economy and keep people working in this area. If successful, we will explore the possibility of applying these policy suggestions in other parts of Maine to reverse the larger demographic trend.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The evolution of modern society has a clear association with high levels of urbanization. This is in order to facilitate economic, social, and cultural experiences and transactions amongst the populations that gather into these urban areas. Continual growth and progression of the urbanization process is never quite as simplistic, clean, or uncomplicated as economic development or policy textbooks claim. Such regions are always susceptible to the emergence of internal disruptions and economic inefficiencies. Furthermore, cities and municipalities face pressures and conditions from external sources, both domestically and internationally. This is especially relevant from a manufacturing perspective, where thriving cities will be harmed by shifting manufacturing bases overseas and changing the industrial process. Over the period shortly following the industrial revolution, large industrial cities flourished on the basis of a mass-production model that demanded direct and indirect inputs and depended on populations of local, cheap labor (Scott 2008). However, by the 1970s and 1980s, many of these industrialized cities like Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh had fallen victim to foreign competition, increased domestic regulation and management, and aging populations.

While many of these former industrialized cities have struggled and floundered in the face of such external pressures, some have also experienced some level of modern renaissance, a process termed in many cities as “urban revitalization” or “urban resurgence.” Throughout the past three decades, American center cities, or cities proper, lost population in every year while suburbs grew, and traditionally highly populated regions, the Northeast and the Midwest, grew at a slower rate than the West and the South (Storper & Manville 2006). Suffering cities have begun to institute revitalization campaigns focusing on a variety of methods to spur population growth and bolster economic activity, that differ from past urban revitalization techniques that focused primarily on industrial regeneration and gross economic activity as measures of success. Newer, more innovative methods of urban revitalization have stressed sustainable development over rapid economic growth, as in the case of Birmingham, England’s transition from an industrial center to a more sustainable community (Weingaertner 2010). These initiatives have been successful in a number of cities across the nation. The revival of American urban areas like Boston, New York, and Chicago, and European centers like Paris and London, belied the idea that old places could live only in the basement of the new economy. Increases in the population of a handful of central cities similarly contradicted long-held beliefs about their inevitable decline (Storper & Manville 2006).

Many of these revitalization initiatives have centered on attracting populations to areas that have seen population emigration. This has led to the rebranding and restructuring of cities’ economies and reputations, generally leading away from past manufacturing bases and into creative economies, in the hopes of creating a desirable location for young, highly educated professionals. Generally speaking, these creative classes tend to focus on the development of regions and economies through the provision of quality of life and recreational amenities

(Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris 2007, 354). Furthermore, many municipal governments develop a broad range of cultural activities to catalyze private development, increase consumption by residents and tourists, improve the city image, and enhance the local quality of life (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris 2007).

A key aspect of attracting young populations and revitalizing urban areas includes some measure of city branding. As Gibson (2005) states, in *Selling City Living*, many urban development strategies are largely symbolic in nature. Essentially, if city leaders can find a way to project “world-class images of urban vitality” into the international marketplace, it would convince tourists and multinational entities to invest in the city (Gibson 2005). Branding a city as a place of creativity and innovation tends to attract creative classes to settle there. For example, it is well known that successful advertising campaigns build upon the identification of the unique selling point (USP) of the product. In cities, this unique selling point is often branded as an active tourist industry or cultural quarter, generally used as a site for consumption and economic activity. The value of the USP is increased if it attracts tourist dollars as well as the creative class (Pratt 2008). The cultivation of such areas necessarily engenders the creation of places and locations that spur economic development and community building. These places, often dubbed “third places,” are social places where people interact that are not the home (“first place”), or a work environment (“second place”). These are important elements of culture, economic activity, and community engagement that are often overlooked due to the changing dynamic of the United States, but are making a return with the recent emphasis on urban resurgence and revitalization (Schillo 2011).

Much of the urban revitalization literature and methodology is focused on urban areas much larger than the one in this study. That is not to say that smaller towns and municipalities do

not engage in urban revitalization or policies to promote urban resurgence. Many of the methods and practices of larger urban regions translate well to smaller municipalities. After all, the bottom line for both is generally the same: attracting and retaining populations and branding the region as an area attractive to professionals and to businesses. In this respect, much of this subject is applicable and useful for the state of Maine. Historically, Maine has been dependent on resource-based manufacturing economies that have suffered as a result of international competition and relocating manufacturing bases. Because of this, Maine has seen a migration of young professionals out of the state, seeking employment elsewhere. Small towns and municipalities throughout the nation have encountered this very problem, and have begun branding and urban resurgence campaigns to help rectify it. Maine is no exception to this, and has already had sterling success rebranding and reinventing Portland. Now, the city of Bangor, the former lumber capital of the world, is in the process of urban revitalization, beginning efforts to attract and retain young professionals to the Bangor area. Bangor has already seen partial resurgence through the efforts of economic engines such as the Kahbang! Music Festival and the Waterfront Concert Series, as well as the annual American Folk Festival and the newly built Cross Insurance Center. While these have undoubtedly been positive influences in the Bangor community and economic arena, it is simply not enough to provide these goods for an aging population. The next step is asking “what motivates young professionals to settle in an area, and specifically in the Bangor area?”

In scope, our primary research aim might appear to be quite limited in its application to broader and more nationally or globally relevant issues. Our question “What motivates young people to settle in the Bangor area?” applies to a number of similarly positioned towns and cities scattered throughout the nation. Bangor has the potential and opportunity to become a thriving



economic and social hub of Central and Northern Maine, yet such an ideal is difficult without a young, diverse, and vibrant population. The ideals and practices of urban resurgence have worked in large cities and towns the world over, and can have an impact on the Bangor area and on the state of Maine as a whole. The rest of the research design analyzes the previous literature on the subject as well as outlines our potential research methods in answering the question, “what attracts young professionals to Bangor, Maine.”

### **3.1 Literature Review**

Much of the research on urban development focuses on efforts in large cities, where the resources are available to implement comprehensive plans of action. The success of these solutions is more easily evaluated than small efforts in isolated areas of the country because larger cities have more resources available to spend on extensive research to revitalize their cities. Unfortunately, research on smaller city revitalization is not as prevalent as information on efforts in large cities, due to the lack of abundance in resources. As Kent Robertson points out, “despite this importance, most of the professional and scholarly literature on downtown development has neglected small cities” (1999, 270). Although there is a greater focus on large city regeneration, there are many characteristics that can translate to smaller city efforts, which could be used to help make Bangor a more attractive place for future settlement. While reviewing previous literature there were several commonalities that past researchers have examined, that will be integrated in our analysis of Bangor. Trends in prior research include: (1) methods for attracting and retaining young professionals, (2) branding the city by maintaining unique features (3) accessibility to both cultural and natural amenities, and (4) prior successful development of resurgent cities. Understanding these key elements is important in the pursuit of finding out what would make Bangor a more inviting place for young people to settle.

### **3.2 Attracting and Retaining Young Professionals**

Researchers have found that career considerations are the most important motivation for skilled staff to take a position in an area. Potential limits to professional development in that place are the main reasons why people will decide not to stay (Miles et al. 2006, 130). Miles found that younger people are not following similar settlement patterns of past generations. It has become much more common for young professionals to maintain a job for two or three years, gain experience and knowledge, and then move on to their next career opportunity in hopes of upward mobility (Miles et al. 2006). An important factor for those deciding where to live is the opportunity for employment in their field. When conducting his research Miles found that "...employment opportunities for spouses was a common suggestion for attracting professionals. Suggested recruitment strategies include seeking out professional couples in conjunction with other employers in need of professional services." (Miles et al. 2006, 143). In both Miles and others' research, it was determined that "on the whole, [young professionals'] movement will be dictated by their career options" (Miles et al. 2006, 142, Whisler et al. 2008).

Other scholars limit their examination to the migration patterns of those with college educations. These researchers find that "...there is an almost universal tendency to stay in those metro areas that enjoy a growing human capital stock" (Whisler et al. 2008, 74). Human capital is the collection of skills, experiences, knowledge, and other non-monetary resources in an individual or group. This research is striking because it means that once enough human capital is established, it starts to expand, creating an environment where people want to stay. In effect, growing human capital will discourage out-migration, especially among people who are young and have a college education (Whisler et al. 2008). If an area has human capital growth, then there is an almost universal preference to stay. Whisler goes on to point out that young academics, who tend to be childless, have a lot of mobility. Therefore when they graduate, if

they are in an area that lacks human capital growth, they are more apt to leave and they have the flexibility to do so easily. Whisler cites lack of recreational opportunities and poor arts programs as two of the main reasons why younger people will be compelled to leave (Whisler et al. 2008).

Weingaertner and Barber (2009) studied the role of small food outlets in urban regeneration environments, but they also mentioned some ways of attracting young professionals. Their focus on attraction contains an “emphasis on ‘Learning, Technology and Leisure’-related schemes” (Weingaertner & Barber 2009, 1662). They argue that if a resurging area can encourage a creative and knowledge-based sector, then the community will be exciting and distinctive, largely made up of the young professionals who are attracted to that atmosphere (Weingaertner & Barber 2009). This claim will be further developed in the next section, because its effectiveness is heavily influenced by an area’s ability to brand itself and creating niche markets, which also attract younger people, especially young professionals.

### **3.3 Branding the City**

Finding a way to trademark a city is an important dimension of its resurgence. Many of the studies done about urban resurgence examine methods like “branding campaigns” (Gibson 2005), finding a “unique selling point” (Pratt 2008), or targeting a “niche market” (Filion 2004). These aspects overlap considerably because they all suggest that in order to be successful and lively, a city needs to be unique, maintaining a distinctive character and targeting a certain audience.

Andy Pratt writes “as advertisers have long known, successful campaigns build upon the identification of the unique selling point (USP) of the product” (Pratt 2008, 112). In his article, Pratt relates this to many cities reclaiming their unique historical and/or cultural heritage in order to distinguish themselves from other cities. If a city can highlight its diversity through reclaiming

its history, it may turn into a place for consumption from “cultural tourists as well as the creative class” (Pratt 2008, 112), which would only help in the efforts to make a city prosper. Pierre Filion et al. (2004) also note that it is important to preserve the distinct nature of a downtown in an urban setting. The best way of achieving this distinction is by finding “a market niche for downtowns” (Filion 2004, 332) which is unique to that individual city. By collaborating with the public sector, smaller urban downtowns provide the perfect canvases to be revitalized into niche markets that reflect their historical heritage. Revitalizing the historical nature of a city also adds to cultural amenities that many people desire. Cultural and natural amenities will be discussed further in the following section.

Timothy Gibson goes into more depth about “urban branding campaigns,” which advertise the benefits of living in cities. Gibson examines the way that cities market their area to specific groups of people, especially “affluent suburbanites” (Gibson 2005, 259). One of the examples that Gibson discusses is a campaign undertaken in Washington, D.C. The city used the slogan “city living, D.C. style” and completely saturated the market with a select group of images that directly represented their branding campaign. Gibson notes that one of the planners stated “we’re going to saturate them with our brand until they can’t think to live anywhere else” (Gibson 2005, 266). The campaign was a way of marketing the city and advertising it in a similar way that you would advertise a product. When selling a product, advertisements will focus on a few select images, utilizing the same font, and similar color schemes. This is all in an effort to brand their product with repetitive imagery. The same is true for branding a city. While it may be difficult, organizers must choose a set of images that highlight the positive aspects of living in that area, which are superior to surrounding areas. Gibson notes that “...the ultimate goal would thus be to create the conditions in which a single encounter with the ‘brand’ would evoke a consistent set of

images about the urban good life” (2005, 266). These repeated encounters with the brand would entice people to move to the area, or at least spend more time in the area, living the “urban good life.” If the branding is successful it is likely that it will attract desired populations, such as young professionals.

There are a few suggestions made throughout the research literature about how to find a brand, unique selling point, or niche market for your city. Michael Schillo (2011) thinks that “third places” are important places to target audiences with a city’s brand to spur revitalization. These third places are social areas, which include bars, cafés, and anywhere else that people may hang out and socialize (Schillo 2011, 30). Schillo’s idea of third places correlates nicely with Weingaertner and Barber’s promotion of supporting established small food outlets, because food outlets would definitely be considered ‘third places.’ Weingaertner and Barber believe that supporting long-time food outlets while a city is going through renovation is an important way to maintain individuality. These “long-established independent retailers can contribute to diversity, distinctiveness and local character, and the resulting gritty urban environment is often a desirable quality that attracts other businesses and individuals” (Weingaertner & Barber 2009, 1656). By embracing the businesses already established in an urban area, cities can enhance their unique atmosphere, which sets them apart from other urban centers while attracting new residents.

However, as Gibson points out, it is important to attract new populations without displacing long-time tenants. Newfound popularity results in an increase in real estate sales and higher city income due to more taxpayers, which would lead to a vast array of desirable services (i.e. better city amenities, and improved schools). This is very positive for future development, but “many working families who sustained their neighborhoods through the difficult years would be unable to compete for housing and would ultimately be excluded from participating in their

city's revitalized future" (Gibson 2005, 274). The same could happen to small indigenous businesses, as they may suffer because of city renovations, and be left in the dark by city planners. It is important to maintain a sense of 'grit' and to not leave long-time residents and businesses behind in the quickly advancing city, marked by a well done branding campaign. In order to keep everyone up to date, Weingaertner and Barber encourage the cities to help the businesses and the people transition and adapt to changes. If cities fail to inform their core population then they risk losing their distinctive environment.

### **3.4 Cultural and Natural Amenities**

Cultural and natural amenities are crucial to attracting and retaining people, especially the creative class. These amenities come in a variety of forms and are shared by residents and visitors alike. Many suggest that these features create a superior place for inventive individuals to live and work, which could minimize the amount of recent college graduates in the area leaving for other urban centers (Grodach et al. 2007; Whisler et al. 2008). The two different types of amenities, natural and cultural, have their own set of advantages and each contributes to a higher quality of life for many of the urban residents. Aesthetics have increasingly become an important consideration for potential residents. It has even been suggested that "non-market transactions, essentially amenities, have grown more important than market transactions in explaining urban growth and decline" (Nichols Clark et al. 2002, 496). Therefore, if a city wishes to prosper, it must embrace both natural and cultural amenities in its growth strategy.

Natural amenities are features in the area that are generally free for the public to enjoy. These include bodies of water, green space (which may include lush vegetation and wildlife), clean air, public squares, and pedestrian friendly streets. Interestingly, Robertson (1999) includes Bangor among his cases and notes that the city has many of these natural amenities already;

Bangor is located at the convergence of the Penobscot River and Kenduskeag Stream, West Market Square is centrally located and provides open space, and the city's downtown is surrounded by scenic hills (Robertson 1999). Filion (2004) observed that many cities that have been successful have developed these natural amenities further by creating waterfront parks, which Bangor has been doing with the Waterfront Concerts and other development along the Penobscot. Bangor is in relatively close proximity to places like the Orono Bog Walk, Acadia National Park, Baxter State Park, and multiple ski resorts, where residents and visitors alike can enjoy recreational activities and an abundance of natural amenities. Further research is required, but it is very possible that Bangor could brand itself as a place of natural amenities and a high quality of life, because it has so many environmental advantages compared to other urban areas. The goal of this project will be to find out which types of potential amenities could attract settlers to the city of Bangor.

Creating and enhancing cultural amenities is equally important for resurgent cities. Nichols Clark and co-authors found that culture has traditionally been subordinate to career opportunities, especially in relation to the city's economy. However, the study found that modern "trends are dramatically elevating the importance of culture [and] cultural activities are increasingly crucial to urban economic vitality" (Nichols Clark et al. 2002, 493). The cultural amenities discussed in the literature include the "third places" mentioned above, as well as theaters, art galleries, museums, and stadiums. Many of the scholars suggest that access to these amenities improves quality of life for all residents, which could further attract younger professionals to the area. There are some restrictions to the scope of these features due to city budgets and cultural demands, but cities should pursue developing whatever amenities they can.

Much of the work that praises cultural amenities discusses them in relation to the 'creative

class.’ The “creative class [is] a wide ranging classification of highly educated workers and ‘knowledge based professionals’” (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris 2007, 354), who have emphasized enhancing their quality of life through greater access to cultural activities. While past thought has been that consumerism is the most important aspect of urban regeneration, current scholars claim that cultural activities have become the engine of city development. Policy-makers may find fruitful developmental outcomes if they enhance their cultural industries to connect with “production and consumption, manufacturing and service” (Pratt 2008, 107). According to Pratt, cultural amenities are an important strategy for attracting the creative class, which also attracts creative industries, crucial to developing economic growth.

Carl Grodach and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (2007) have provided more information on how cultural activities have revitalized urban cities. They found that there are “three types of cultural strategies – ‘Entrepreneurial Strategies,’ ‘Creative Class Strategies,’ and ‘Progressive Strategies’ – that describe the characteristics and objectives of distinct approaches to cultural development” (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris 2007, 350). The entrepreneurial strategies are motivated by the market and lead by economic objectives, creative class strategies enhance cultural amenities for a better quality of life, and progressive strategies are marked by grassroots organizing in an effort to extend cultural amenities more widely (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris 2007). While cultural activities are often subject to criticism by local governments or may be viewed solely as tourist attractions, many of the advocates of cultural amenities see them as generators of economic activity, which contribute to making a better living and working environment. Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris also stress that while they have found three types of cultural strategies, they should be used together and not exclusively.

Natural and cultural amenities may differ, but they also share some commonalities.



Weingaertner and Barber (2009) claim that by supporting indigenous food outlets and other local businesses, cities can continue to maintain “indirect positive impacts on the environment (e.g. reduced transport needs and emissions)” (Weingaertner & Barber 2009, 1671). This is important because it is perpetuating the culture and distinctiveness of urban areas while also conserving the natural amenities that many people enjoy. Both types of amenities are also likely to be “unique selling points.” If an urban area can revitalize its historical character, it can function as both a natural and cultural amenity, making it a desirable place for tourists to visit and boosting the economy in the process.

### **3.5 Resurgent Cities: Success Stories**

Even though there is less research on the resurgence of smaller cities, Robertson (1999) claims that there are many similarities in the principles of downtown revitalization for both small and large cities. He suggests seven guidelines for any sized city to follow. His guidelines state; “maintain high density levels, emphasize historic preservation, maintain/develop true civic public places, do not “suburbanize” the downtown, develop and enforce strict design controls, do not underestimate the importance of street-level activity, [and] plan for a multifunctional downtown” (Robertson 1999, 280). As we can see, many of these guidelines overlap with notions of branding a city and developing cultural activities and amenities. Robertson’s seven guidelines will be important to remember when moving forward with research and planning Bangor’s revival. Another set of criteria was gathered from Weingaertner and Barber (2009), who suggested three strategies for continued regeneration. These three recommendations were; “putting local people at the heart of the process, improving the quality of the local environment, and taking an integrated and long term approach” (Weingaertner & Barber 2009, 1656).

Weingaertner and Barber (2009) specifically analyze the role that indigenous food outlets

play in maintaining distinction when renovating a city. Their analysis is helpful, and reminds us how important long-established businesses are to urban development. Weingaertner and Barber warn that if too many businesses are lost during renovation, then the areas character could be negatively affected. This was mentioned earlier, because these local businesses are ways of branding the city and making it distinct. Rather than promoting the city to outside businesses (which could displace indigenous businesses) for economic development, municipalities should try to strengthen their already established businesses, which will spur more independent business development and create economic growth in a more sustainable way. If this happens, it is stressed that communication between stakeholders in a regenerative project is vital from the beginning stages of regeneration, so that everyone is aware of the plan. This way, issues can be addressed promptly and the community can move forward together, without the fear of businesses being lost during the transition period (Weingaertner & Barber 2009). Maintaining a level of understanding between city officials, business owners, and long-term residents will contribute to a more sustainable city for generations to come.

Finally, Filion et al. (2004) wrote about many of the ideas already mentioned, identified success stories, explored why these towns were successful, and what other cities could do to resurge. The study suggests that many of the cities that have remained viable have a few distinct characteristics, such as being close to a university and/or state capital, having rich historical character, and appealing to tourism (Filion et al. 2004). After conducting interviews within successful towns, many respondents also suggested that food outlets, cultural activities, and natural amenities were important factors to their city's appeal. These features helped the regions because they were properly woven into the fabric of the city (Filion et al. 2004). Filion et al. (2004) also point out the significance of distinguishing an urban area in direct contrast to a

suburban area. Much of the erosion of metropolitan areas has been due to the suburbanization of the United States. It is therefore essential that cities wishing to revitalize establish themselves as urban downtowns that are pedestrian-friendly, accentuate historical character, provide street-level activities, contain a niche market, and offer a variety of food outlets (Filion et al. 2004).

In order to attract and retain young people, a city needs to design a marketing or branding scheme for their city. This urban branding should distinguish itself from the suburban realm, and should highlight the natural and cultural amenities the city has to offer. Even though research suggests that little has been documented on the regeneration of cities the size of Bangor, there have been several ideas uncovered that can be applied to a city of any size. The elements of successful cities mentioned above are quite broad, therefore this study will use the basic framework of these components in order to narrow down what people would like to see established in Bangor specifically, especially post-graduates and young professionals who are considering long term residence. The hope is to take past literature and be able to apply those concepts to Bangor in a way that is most efficient for the Bangor City Council, established businesses, and long-time residents, all of whom will be important players in the resurgence and sustainability of Bangor.

#### **4.1 Study Design**

This project consists of applied research in the form of an action research study, focusing on raising awareness of demographic and revitalization issues for Bangor, Maine in efforts to develop a plan of action to address these issues. This project took place as a year-long collaboration between Bangor City Councilors Ben Sprague and Gibran Graham and a student group in *POS 487-488: Practicum in Engaged Policy Studies* (Cameron Huston, Sarah Nicols, Spencer Warmuth, and Gareth Warr). This study asked participants to actively participate in the

research process through survey and qualitative methodology and to determine what factors attract them to “settle down” in an area. Additionally, stakeholders will be asked to assess current efforts to revitalize the Bangor area and to consider possible new collaborations to accomplish this goal.

## **4.2 Research Methods**

This project will consist of applied research in the form of an action research study. We asked participants in the study to actively participate in the research process. Additionally, we focused our research on raising awareness of demographic and revitalization issues for Bangor, Maine in efforts to develop a plan of action to address these issues. Participants in this applied research included the following groups:

- **Participant Group 1:** University of Maine alumni in the greater Bangor area
- **Participant Group 2:** Current University of Maine students (graduate/undergraduate)

We collected quantitative data in the form of participant surveys and the use of existing statistics on the population demographics of Bangor. Potential respondents were recruited via email to take part in the survey with cooperation from the University of Maine Alumni Association for Participant Group 1. The survey will be a web form hosted through Qualtrics (Participant Groups 1 and 2).

Since the data from these stakeholders best benefits us in large quantities, we constructed a survey to ask simple questions in order to find out where people are settling and why they are settling in those regions. We asked respondents questions in an effort to measure what factors contribute to their determining a place of extended residency. Our goal was to use the quantitative data from the survey to measure what factors have the most impact on their decisions to “settle down” and what factors they find to be most attractive in making their

decisions. We will examine the tie between how much time someone spends in Bangor (and the type of activities in which they are engaged) and the likelihood that person stays in the region after graduation. These questions will have mostly limited and brief responses so we can effectively determine what these attracting factors may be. We included a section at the end of the survey for people to provide individual qualitative feedback not explicitly addressed in our survey.

For the purpose of this survey, we define “*place of extended residency*” as a location respondents choose to live for an extended period of time, for reasons including, but not limited to career goals, optimal conditions to raise a family, civic involvement opportunities, and general satisfaction with the area. In spite of the broad nature of this definition, all responses were considered and categorized based on the areas of extended residency outlined above. We recognize that our definitions and categories may be biased, and therefore we will not make generalizations outside of this study.

We recognized that responses from current students and alumni would likely differ in regards to what attracts them to settle in an area. Therefore, they were analyzed as such to help prevent generalizations from being made between the two respondent groups. The survey will make this distinction by asking what alumni *are* looking for, and what current students think they *will* be looking for. Data was delineated to fit the respondent group (i.e. distinguishing between what alumni are currently looking for in their place of extended residency and what current students plan to look for in their place of extended residency).

This study involved human subject research. Risks and privacy concerns were addressed through respondent anonymity in the survey portion of the research and through written consent in the focus group section. The researchers have underwent training in the ethical and legal

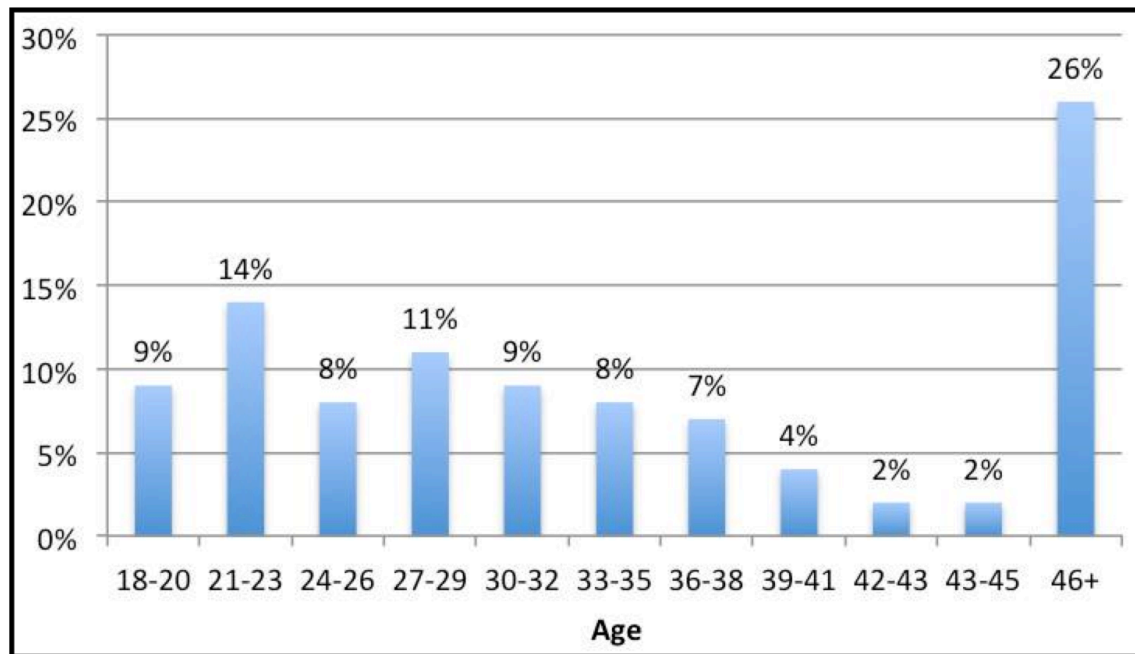
obligations involved in conducting human subject research. All human subject research will be approved through the University of Maine Institutional Review Board.

## **5.1 Findings**

Survey respondents were recruited through several strategies. First, a public message was sent out to all current students at the University of Maine asking them to participate. The University of Maine Alumni Association solicited respondents by contacting alumni located in the Bangor area. Finally, an announcement was made in the Bangor Daily News to attract any remaining alumni who wished to participate in the study. The responses are reviewed below, distributed among four separate categories. These categories include demographics, reasons to visit Bangor, the attractiveness and likelihood of moving to Bangor, and what factors are in most need of improvement in the city.

## 5.2 Survey Responses and Demographics

**Figure 1: Age Demographics**



*Question: “What is your age?”*

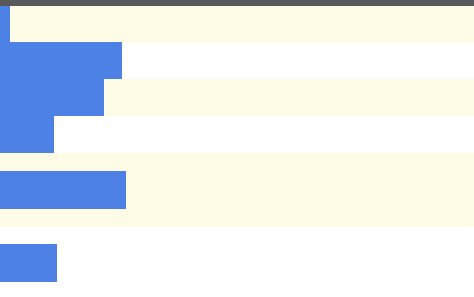
The survey respondent demographics were fairly consistent with the state of Maine and the greater Bangor area. Given the channels of distribution utilized, this is not surprising; respondents were contacted via the University of Maine email server (First Class), the University of Maine Alumni Association, and the Bangor Daily News. We had 900 respondents complete the survey, 233 of which were students and 667 were alumni. The student group was further broken down into “traditional” versus “non-traditional” status: 48 were nontraditional and 182 were traditional. Over a quarter of the respondents are over the age of 45; the next highest respondent demographic was the college-aged, 18-23 year old block. Of the entire respondent pool, roughly two-thirds were female and a third was male. From a racial standpoint, 95% of survey participants were white, 1% were Native American, Hispanic, or Asian, and 2% preferred not to answer. This distribution is generally reflective of the state of Maine as a whole.

Also, one of the likely key factors of settling in a town can be a previous or existing relationship with the area. Many people live in the same general area that they grew up, and therefore a question determining where our survey respondents originated from became necessary. While 34% of our survey respondents were from the Bangor Area, the more common response was Maine as a whole, which received 46% of responses. Only 20% were not from Maine (out of state or country). This is relatively unsurprising given the in-state to out-of-state ratio at the University of Maine, where most of the students hail from the northeast.

### 5.3 Reasons to Visit Bangor

One of the goals of this survey was to figure out how often respondents visit Bangor, and to find out what activities they are doing while there. Below are a few of the results from these questions. This sections reveals how many times students visit Bangor each month, which areas the students are going, the frequency of various activities students are doing when they visit Bangor, and what kinds of work experiences students have had in Bangor.

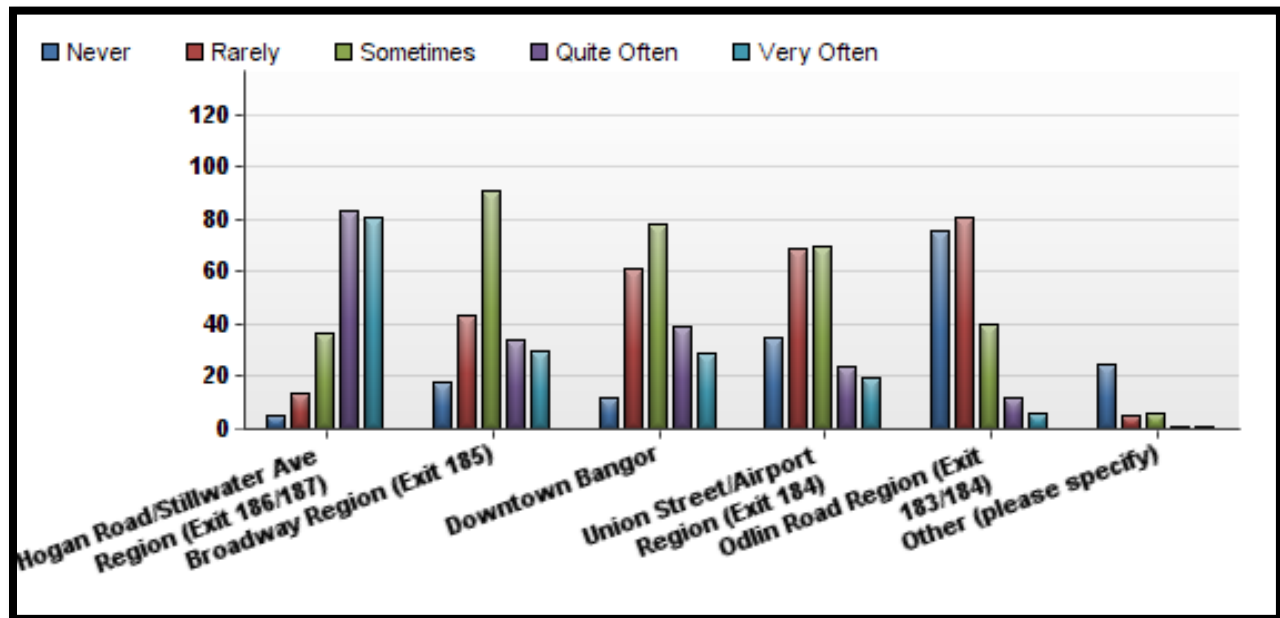
**Table 1:** Students – Frequency of visiting Bangor during a month

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Never		5	2%
2	1-3 times		56	26%
3	4-6 times		48	22%
4	7-10 times		25	11%
5	More than 10 times		58	27%
6	I live in Bangor		26	12%
	Total		218	100%

*Question: “How many times do you visit Bangor in a month?”*

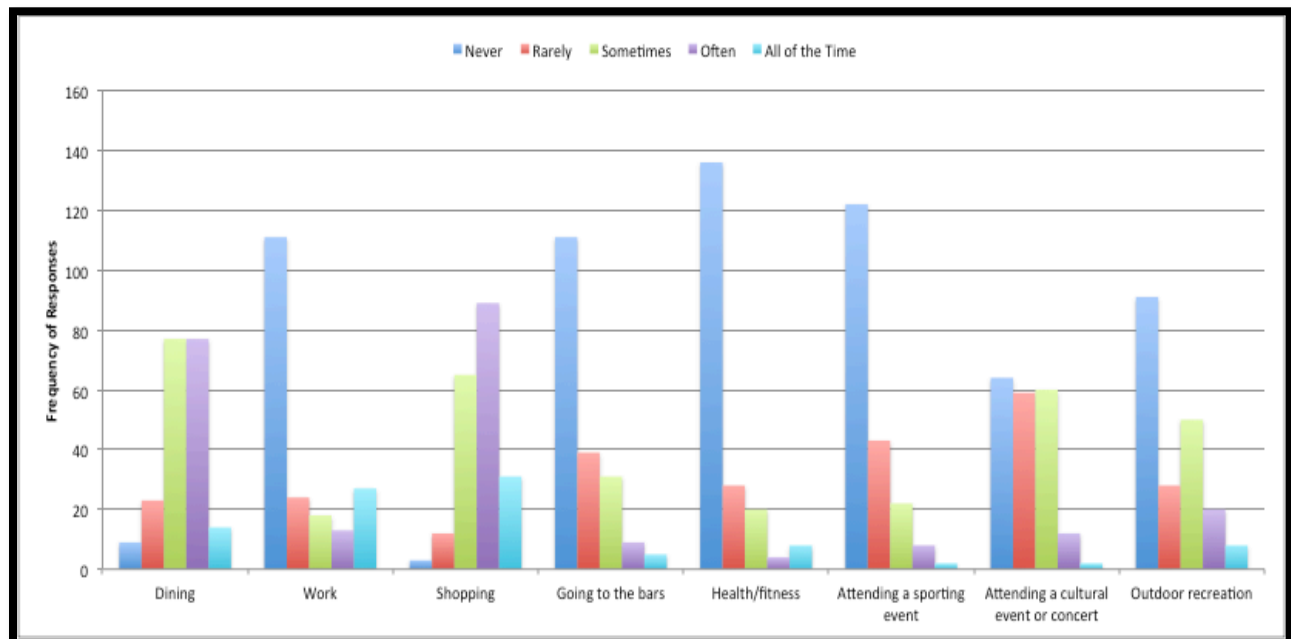


**Figure 2:** Students – Frequency of visiting different areas in Bangor









*Question: “When you go to Bangor, how often do you visit the following areas?”*

**Figure 3:** Students – Frequency of doing activities in Bangor



*Question: “How frequently do you do the following activities in Bangor?”*

**Table 2: Students – Work/Employment Experiences in Bangor**

Answer		Response	%
Worked full time		33	15%
Worked part time		80	37%
Held a paid internship		7	3%
Held an unpaid internship		14	6%
Other (please specify)		4	2%
This doesn't apply to me		119	54%

*Question: “Which, if any, of the following work/employment experiences have you had in Bangor? Please check all that apply.”*

Under the assumption that the student respondent pool is representative of the larger population, the data suggest that roughly 98% of respondents *do* visit the City of Bangor at least once a month. Of the respondents who visit Bangor each month, the highest percentage (27%) visit Bangor more than 10 times a month and the lowest percentage (12%) visit Bangor 7-10 times a month. Similar percentages of respondents either visit Bangor more than 10 times a month (27%), or only 1-3 times a month (26%). This is quite a polarizing statistic. However, based upon this question alone, we cannot infer why respondents may or may not be visiting Bangor.

Again, assuming the respondent pool is representative of the larger population, the data suggests that the Hogan Road/Stillwater Avenue region of Bangor is the most frequently visited region of Bangor, with roughly 38% of respondents stating that they visit the area “quite often” or “very often.” The other regions listed on the survey matrix failed to see more than a 17% level of respondents stating that they visit the areas “quite often” or “very often.” The Odlin Road region was where respondents stated that they visited the least often, with roughly 35% stating

that they never visited, and only 2% claiming to visit the region “very often.” This question alone cannot infer why respondents visit or do not visit each region of Bangor

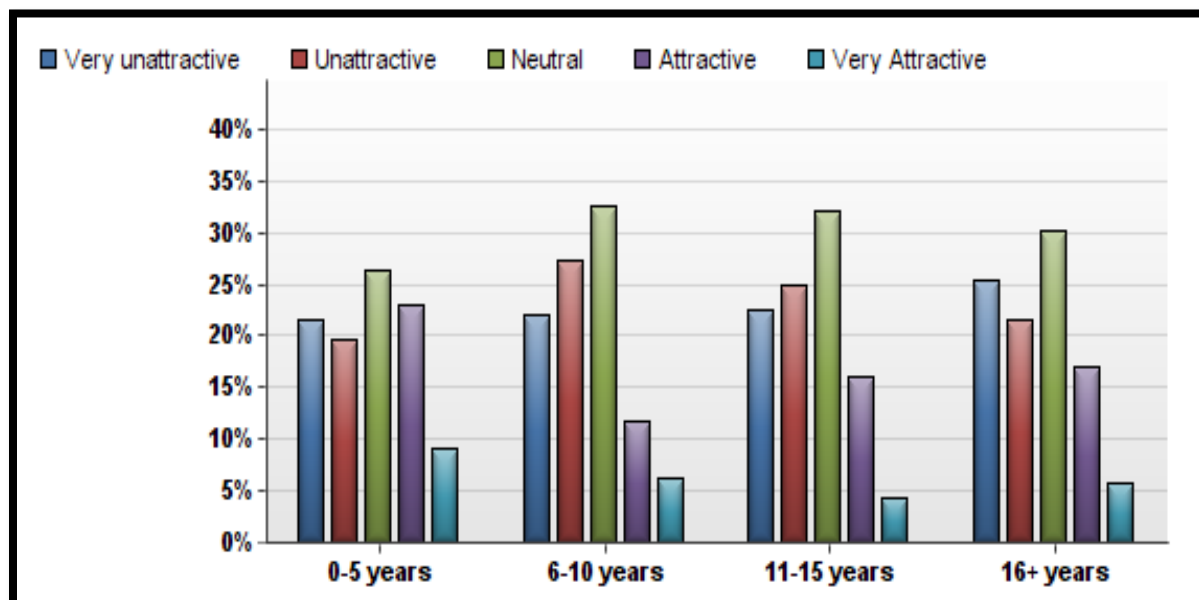
However, the following figure asked students about how frequently they were doing various activities in Bangor. If this question is representative of the larger population, the data suggest that students are frequently going shopping and dining when they are in Bangor, which supports why respondents are visiting the Hogan Road/Stillwater area more frequently. Many students said that they ‘never’ participate in health/fitness activities, attend a sporting event, work, go to the bars, or participate in outdoor recreational activities in Bangor. Generally, the results indicate that students go to Bangor for things that Orono lacks. This includes more varied dining and shopping options, as the Orono area doesn’t have quite the nearly as large of a shopping and dining scene as the Bangor area does, especially in comparison to the Bangor Mall and Hogan Road area. Based on the data it is clear that options that can be found in Orono, specifically health and fitness, outdoor recreation, and going to the bar, were not very important factors when deciding to visit Bangor.

The survey also asked current students what kind of work experience they have had in Bangor. 15% of respondents had held a full time job, 37% had held a part time job, 3% had a paid internship, and 6% had an unpaid internship. However, 54% of respondents had not had any form of work experience in Bangor. It is quite striking that over half of the respondents said that they had never held a job in Bangor, which could contribute to why many do not believe that there are available jobs in the region, however this cannot be assumed based on this table alone.

#### 5.4 Attractiveness/Likelihood of moving to Bangor

Assuming that the respondents for this survey were representative of students at large, the data shows that most of the respondents would prefer to live in a small city. We gave the respondents the ability to check as many of the options as they'd like, and over half (61%) chose a small city. Rural and suburban areas were tied at 45%, and a large city was least preferable, with only 20% of respondents wanting to live there.

**Figure 4:** Students – Attractiveness of Living in Bangor on a Time Scale

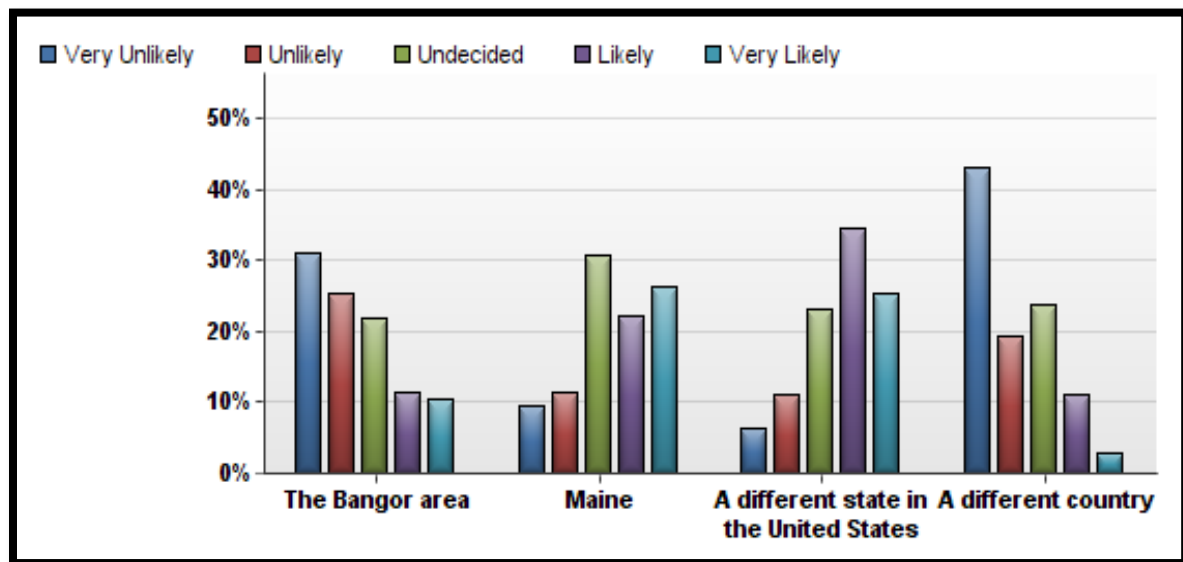


*Question: “How attractive is Bangor as a potential destination after graduation in the next...”*

Despite the fact that students found a small city to be the preferable place to live after graduation, the survey revealed that Bangor was not that city for most people. There were a high number of “neutral” responses across all time brackets. Bangor is generally seen as “most attractive” during the first five years following graduation. After that initial period, the portion of students who saw Bangor as an attractive destination fell from 23% to under 17%, and the

percentage who found it unattractive increased from 41% to 49%. From this data, it was reasonable to conclude that students generally do not consider Bangor to be a desirable post-graduate destination, as the respondents were more than twice as likely to vote it “very unattractive” instead of “very attractive.”

**Figure 5:** Students – Likelihood of Living in Different Regions



*Question: “How likely are you to live in the following areas after you graduate?”*

When asked how likely students were to move to Bangor, the state of Maine, or out of the state or country after graduation, the results corroborated the general perception of Bangor as an “unattractive” city. Most students were likely leave the Bangor area and go somewhere else in Maine, or to a different state entirely. The general likelihood that students would move to the Bangor area was comparable to the likelihood they would move out of the country.

**Table 3:** Students – Importance of Factors in Moving

Question	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Total Responses
Work/job opportunity	0%	0%	1%	22%	76%	215
Family and/or friends	1%	8%	23%	45%	22%	214
Cost of living in the area	1%	5%	14%	53%	27%	215
Quality of local school systems	11%	17%	28%	28%	16%	214
Racial and ethnic diversity	17%	20%	41%	19%	4%	215
Appearance/aesthetics	5%	5%	31%	49%	10%	215
Entertainment	5%	7%	32%	45%	11%	214
Outdoor attractions	5%	5%	25%	45%	20%	214
Low crime rates and safe neighborhoods	0%	4%	16%	48%	31%	214
Quality public transportation	12%	18%	27%	34%	9%	214
Other (please specify)	35%	4%	35%	15%	12%	26

*Question: “How would you rank the importance of each factor on where you will live after you graduate?”*

To help determine what it was about Bangor that failed to attract more people, a series of questions were designed to uncover what features were crucial to a current student and an alumnus when considering where to move. Due to an error in publishing the survey, only current students were asked to rate the importance of “low crime rates” and “public transportation.”

For current students, the opportunity for employment is by far the dominating factor influencing their location post-graduation. 99% of respondents said it was important or very important (over 76% of which said the latter). Second to employment, cost of living and crime rates were almost equal in their importance to respondents; for both categories, 79% of respondents rated it as “important” or “very important” (with crime rates achieving a slightly better mean). Family/friends and outdoor attractions were the only other categories that scored a large enough majority to be considered “generally important,” forming a “third tier” of factors. Less than 10% of respondents rated either aforementioned category as “unimportant” or “very

unimportant,” and the rest were spread fairly evenly between “neutral” and “very important.”

The rest of the factors received mixed responses, with students generally rating them between “neutral” and “important.” Quality of local school systems, public transportation, and ethnic diversity had the lowest averages of importance among students. Among these “generally unimportant” factors, quality of school systems had the highest average and greatest variation of responses, whereas ethnic diversity achieved the lowest mean and the lowest amount of variation responses.

**Table 4:** Alumni - Importance of Factors in Moving

Question	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very important	Total Responses
Work/job opportunity	4%	3%	4%	17%	71%	593
Family and/or friends	3%	3%	13%	28%	53%	595
Cost of living in the area	4%	4%	18%	37%	37%	594
Quality of local school systems	14%	12%	17%	22%	35%	595
Racial and ethnic diversity	24%	24%	37%	11%	4%	590
Appearance/aesthetics	8%	9%	25%	42%	16%	591
Entertainment	7%	10%	28%	40%	16%	592
Outdoor attractions	6%	9%	23%	38%	24%	585
Other (please specify)	17%	5%	31%	2%	31%	36

*Question: “Today, how would you rank the importance of each factor on your move to your current residence?”*

For alumni, work was also the most important factor in considering their move after college; over 88% said it was “important” or “very important.” Family and friends, while not as dominant as work, was a very influential factor for alumni. Half of the alumni respondents said it was “very important,” and almost 30% said it was “important.” Most respondents said cost of living was at least of “neutral” or above importance, making it the third principal factor in alumni’s minds when they were considering moving to their current location. The rest were all of

“neutral-importance;” appearance, entertainment, quality school systems, and outdoor attractions all achieved similar rates of positive responses. Quality of school systems was notable in that almost 35% of the respondents considered it “very important.” Ethnic diversity was once again the least important factor, since 85% of the respondents said that racial diversity was “neutral” to “very unimportant.” Compared to current students, alumni valued the presence of friends and family and the quality of school systems more, and everything else decreased in importance.

**Table 5:** Students – Frequency of Visiting Bangor vs. Likelihood of Moving to Bangor

	Never, 1-3 times	4-10 times	More than 10 times
Very unlikely/Unlikely	<b>76.2%</b>	66.2%	<b>39.3%</b>
Undecided	20.6%	20.3%	19.6%
Likely/Very Likely	<b>3.2%</b>	13.5%	<b>41.1%</b>

*Comparing: “How many times do you visit Bangor a month?” to “How likely are you to live in Bangor after you graduate?”*

The data revealed a couple of important relationships between the questions in the survey. Bangor’s attractiveness and likelihood as a destination is affected by the frequency with which a respondent visits Bangor. 41% of the people who visit Bangor more than 10 times a month considered a “likely” or “very likely” destination, compared to only 3.2% of those who visited 3 or fewer times per month. The portion of respondents that say “neutral” stays almost the same across all frequency brackets. Another finding shows that students who do not visit Bangor regularly are much less likely to see Bangor as an “attractive” place to live after graduation. The survey found that 56% of those who visited Bangor less than three times a month saw Bangor as



a “very unattractive” or “unattractive” place to live in the next 5 years, whereas 43% of students who visited Bangor more than 10 times a month see Bangor as an “attractive” or “very attractive” place to live in the next 5 years.

**Table 6:** Students – Work Experience vs. Likelihood of Living in Bangor

	Worked Full Time/Worked Part Time	Paid Internship/Unpaid Internship	This Does Not Apply
Very Unlikely/Unlikely	46.6 %	36.8%	<b>64.4%</b>
Undecided	22.7%	21%	21.7%
Likely/Very Likely	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	13.9%

*Comparing: “Which, if any, of the following work/employment experiences have you had in Bangor? Please check all that apply.” to “How likely are you to live in the following areas after you graduate?” (Bangor)*

**Table 7:** Students – Work Experience vs. Likelihood of Living in Maine

	Worked Full Time/Worked Part Time	Paid Internship/Unpaid Internship	This Does Not Apply
Very Unlikely/Unlikely	15.9%	15.8%	25.2%
Undecided	27.3%	26.3%	32.2%
Likely/Very Likely	<b>56.8%</b>	<b>57.9%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>

*Comparing: “Which, if any, of the following work/employment experiences have you had in Bangor? Please check all that apply.” to “How likely are you to live in the following areas after you graduate?” (Maine)*

**Table 8:** Students – Work Experience vs. Likelihood of Living in a Different State

	Worked Full Time/Worked Part Time	Paid Internship/Unpaid Internship	This Does Not Apply
Very unlikely/Unlikely	23.3%	31.6%	13.3%
Undecided	25.6%	31.6%	22.1%
Likely/Very Likely	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>64.6%</b>

*Comparing: “Which, if any, of the following work/employment experiences have you had in Bangor? Please check all that apply.” to “How likely are you to live in the following areas after you graduate?” (Different State)*

**Table 9:** Students – Work Experience vs. Likelihood of Living in a Different Country

	Worked Full Time/Worked Part Time	Paid Internship/Unpaid Internship	This Does Not Apply
Very Unlikely/Unlikely	70.9%	73.7%	55.4%
Undecided	16.3%	21.1%	28.6%
Likely/Very Likely	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>

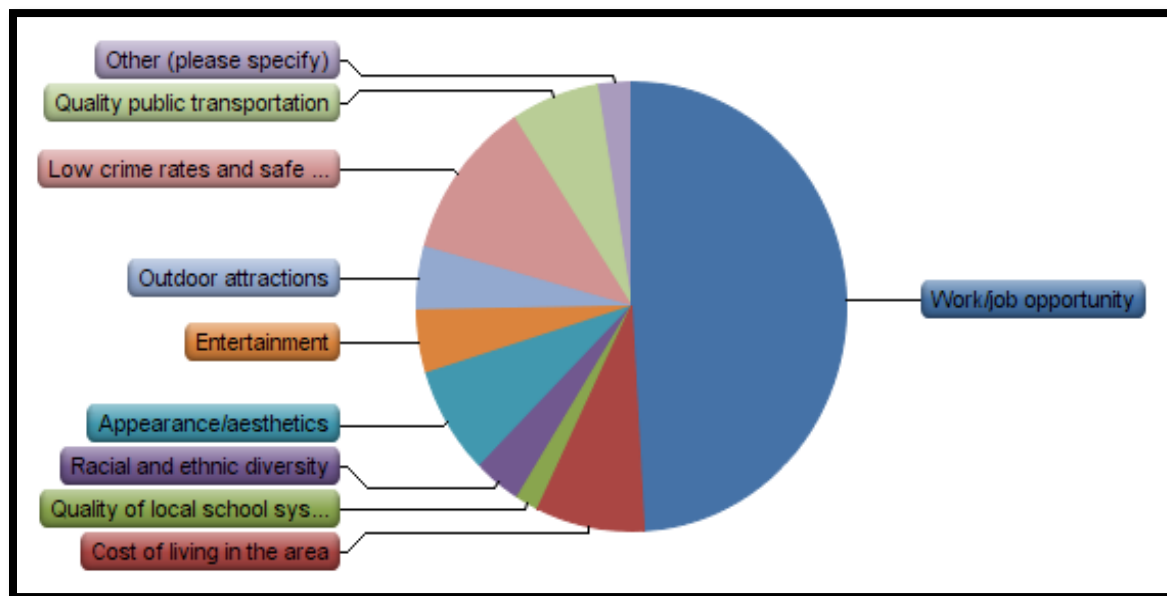
*Comparing: “Which, if any, of the following work/employment experiences have you had in Bangor? Please check all that apply.” to “How likely are you to live in the following areas after you graduate?” (Different Country)*

When aggregating the respondents who had some form of work or internship, we found that the number who held some form of employment was almost equal to the number of respondents who had none. The students who held some form of employment in the city generally rated Bangor much more positively as a post-graduate destination. Of those who had never had employment in Bangor, only 14% said they were likely or very likely to move to Bangor, compared to 31% among those who worked and 42% of those who interned. For Maine

as a whole, more than half of those who had jobs or internships in Bangor said they were likely to stay in the state, compared to 43% of those who didn't have any employment. The same relationship appears when observing the relationship between work experience of moving out of the state or out of the country. Almost two-thirds of the unemployed students said they were likely or very likely to leave the state, compared to 51% of those with jobs and 37% of those with internships. Over 70% of the employed respondents said they were unlikely to leave the country, compared to the 55% of the unemployed pool.

### 5.5 What is in Need of Improvement in Bangor?

**Figure 6:** Most in Need of Improvement



*Question: “Which **one** of the following areas do you feel is most in need of improvement in Bangor?”*

**Figure 7:** Wordcloud of Qualitative Responses



*Question: “If there was one thing that Bangor could do in order to make itself a more attractive destination to settle after you graduate, what would it be?”*

At the end of our survey we offered respondents the opportunity to answer questions about the most needed areas of improvement in Bangor. The first asked “Which one of the following areas do you feel is most in need of improvement in Bangor?” Almost half (49%) of respondents said that work/job opportunities was the single most important area for Bangor to improve. The second highest rated was low crime rates and safe neighborhoods, which 12% of respondents selected. Cost of living, appearance/aesthetics, and quality public transportation were the other three categories to achieve significant numbers of responses (achieving 8%, 8%, and 7% respectively). In the “other” category, responses were mixed, but a few respondents cited the lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the city.

We also asked the respondents to answer: “if there was one thing that Bangor could do in order to make itself a more attractive destination to settle after you graduate, what would it be?”

Unlike our other questions, this was a qualitative inquiry that allowed the respondent to write in their own thoughts. Overwhelmingly, the responses of our survey population pointed to the lack of jobs or opportunities in Bangor, particularly among the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Many respondents claimed that they would enjoy settling in the Bangor Area if only more employment opportunities existed in their field. The above word cloud of the responses of the survey population highlights this fact.

Both groups cited the lack of quality jobs as the primary barrier to settling in the Bangor area as well as the availability of quality housing. From an alumni:

*“Plain and simple-- there have to be employment opportunities that provide a decent income. Sadly, my daughter & son-in-law, both recent graduates of UMaine who would love to live in Maine, are living and working in the Boston area because of professional job opportunities in the fields of science and engineering that simply don't exist in this local area or state.”*

Current students also discussed job opportunities as the largest obstacle to settling in the area:

*“Job opportunity for graduated students, especially STEM fields.”*

*“Quality job opportunities that connected people with the networks in the community.”*

Another issue that a variety of alumni felt was worth addressing was the lack of activities in the greater Bangor area and the lack of cultural diversity:

*“Although it's going in the right direction, Bangor could use more "things to do". Fusion is on the right track though.”*

*“If there [were] more good job opportunities along with a larger cultural diversity (culinary destinations) and more entertainment diversity. Overall I think Bangor has been improving in all these aspects over past couple of years.”*

*“Greater diversity in general. There is some ethnic diversity, but not nearly enough. Their culture and potential for helping Bangor's economic growth is invaluable. The Stillwater region continues to develop with chain businesses, but the other regions (aside from the Downtown*

*region) get comparable traffic. More development of small business and encouraging foot traffic will make the city feel more lively.”*

A lot of respondents mentioned the improvement Bangor has made in this field (with the Waterfront Concerts, shows at the Cross Insurance Center, etc), but that there still isn’t enough of a variety of activities that are available at all times of the year.

The prevalence of pedestrian and bicycle friendly areas was another consistent theme of the qualitative responses. Many felt that the Bangor bus system was in need of an overhaul, and more areas needed to be pedestrianized, encouraging greater amounts of foot traffic in the city:

*“For me, really the only thing keeping me from living in Bangor is that I don't drive, so I need to be near UMaine. I'm a grad student and hope to work at UMaine in some capacity after I graduate, so unless Bangor was able to significantly improve its public transportation, there isn't much that could get me to live in Bangor.”*

*“Create a large walking area along the water similar to the waterfront walking area in DT Portland. Also more outside restaurants along the water would attract more people. Incorporating a bike path along the water would also be aesthetically pleasing as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle.”*

*“A bicycle path or lane from UMaine to downtown Bangor would bring more students into town to start seeing potential post grad opportunities. It would also allow those of us who live in Bangor to commute by bike to campus and those students who live close to campus to bike commute to Bangor.”*

Several commented that while there were things to do and places to go in Bangor, it generally had an “empty” or “dead” feel outside of the Downtown, mostly due to commercialization of the rest of the city.

While nearly all of the respondents cited the Bangor area job availability as the largest obstacle to living in Bangor, nearly all have noted that Bangor has made great strides over the

past several years, with specific nods to the downtown culinary and nightlife scene and to FUSION:Bangor. If Bangor continues on this path of improvement, it is likely that it will become a more attractive region for young professionals and recent graduates to settle in.

## 6.1 Analysis

This data is significant because it shows that an overwhelming percentage of respondents visit Bangor at least once a month. When trying to attract younger residents to settle in Bangor after graduation, these data might suggest that getting current University of Maine students to visit Bangor is not actually part of the problem, given that 98% of student respondents state that they already do visit Bangor. This data suggests that Bangor could address the issue by focusing more on creating opportunities for students post-graduation rather than attracting them to visit the city while enrolled as students.

The data from **Figure 2** generally outlines the most frequently visited areas of Bangor. Data on the frequency of student visits to the Odlin Road region could be used for one of the following approaches. The first is that because so few students visit the region, it should not be included in any strategic plan to attract recent graduates to settle in the area. Alternatively, this information could be used as an opportunity to carry out revitalization projects in the Odlin Road region that could be tailored to attracting recent graduates to settle (i.e. new job or economic opportunities).

Similarly, data on regions that students visit more frequently could be seen through two scopes. First, students do visit these regions (Hogan Road/Stillwater Avenue, Broadway, and Downtown), but they are not settling in the area after they graduate. The first approach could be that students are visiting these regions more often than others, but their visits to these regions are not enough to attract them to settle in Bangor after graduating. However, it's difficult to say why

this is based on this data alone. An alternative approach would be to use the information of what regions of Bangor students are visiting most often and to incentivize students to stay in these areas.

Correlating **Figure 2** with **Figure 3**, connections can be made about where students are visiting and what they are doing in those places. The Hogan Road/Stillwater region (the Bangor Mall) are most frequented, with the Broadway and Downtown regions falling in distant second. This highlights that students generally visit Bangor in order to capitalize on things and activities that are not readily available in Orono, namely shopping and the variety of dining options, which are more concentrated in the Bangor Mall area. Students also claimed that access to outdoor recreation was a relatively important factor in deciding where to live post-graduation, yet 46% of respondents “never” do outdoor recreational activities in Bangor. Capitalizing on the Bangor City Forest could be a way to attract current students to Bangor’s outdoor areas, and possibly foster new images of what Bangor has to offer.

Student's desire to live in a small city bodes well for Bangor. As a city of approximately 32,000 residents, Bangor would seem to fit into that category. One of the downfalls of this question is that there is no specific definition of the differences between each category. What constitutes a small versus a large city is up to the respondents’ discretion. For that reason, we cannot say with complete certainty how the respondents would classify Bangor. While we think that Bangor is a small city, others may have had a different image of a small city in their minds when checking that “small city” choice. Regardless of the semantics, Bangor is an urban area with under 50,000 people living within its confines, putting it on the lower end of the scale. If size is a determinant in the attractiveness of city living, and smaller is better, than Bangor must advertise this advantage to motivate more students to stick around.



Despite the fact that Bangor is a small city, students on the whole did not see it as an “attractive” destination, especially in the long term. The results indicate that students consider the Bangor area to be a “stepping stone” to other places. The fact that the rest of Maine and other states were both equally rated as more likely destinations indicates there is some real or perceived difference between Bangor and other small cities/similar areas of interest. When reviewing later questions about what in Bangor respondents believed was most in need of improvement, it appears that this difference is the availability of jobs in student's fields.

Students overwhelmingly rated job and career opportunities as the most important factor in deciding where to move. If Bangor is perceived to be devoid of those opportunities (in comparison to other places), students are less likely to see Bangor as an attractive destination. After that cost of living, crime rates, the presence of family or friends, and outdoor attractions stand out as the most important factors in students’ minds. “Outdoor attractions” was the only non-utilitarian concern whose importance stood out to students. Either being in Maine has made students appreciate nature, or an appreciation of nature has made them come to Maine; regardless, a significant portion of the University of Maine’s student population consider this to be far more important than public transportation, quality of schools, appearance, entertainment, and diversity. The “above-neutral” importance of entertainment and appearance indicate that while they are not “deciding factors” in choosing location, they are likely on student’s minds when comparing two places that otherwise offer equal employment, living, safety, etc.

Beyond attracting more jobs, Bangor would benefit from any reduction of housing costs and crime. Bangor can do nothing about the presence of family and friends, but it could benefit from increasing the availability of low-cost, affordable housing in safe neighborhoods. Bangor does not have a huge crime problem, but eliminating that which occurs in low-rent residential

areas will be key to bringing professionals into those areas in need of more residents and local investment. Ethnic diversity was on average the least important factor; the large number of neutral responses and low amount of variation indicate that changes in diversity will have very little effect in attracting either greater or lesser numbers of graduates, at least among our current respondent pool. It could be the case that the low existing levels of diversity are “self-perpetuating” and that a concerted effort is necessary to make the city (and the University of Maine) a more attractive destination for racial and ethnic minorities. Quality of local schools and public transportation achieved better means, but had higher rates of variation, indicating that while some of the respondents considered the quality of school to be important, an almost equal number of people considered these to be neutral or unimportant. This likely reflects the fact that these are important things for those portions of the student population who either don’t own transportation or are planning to have a family, but are relatively unimportant to all others.

Unlike current students, who are more concerned with cost of living and crime rates, alumni were much more concerned about the presence of family and quality school systems. The practical concern of cost of living, while important, was less of an issue than having employment and being near those they knew. This suggests that the current generations of students are thinking less about where their families or friends are located than their predecessors, and more about affordability and safety. The average value alumni respondents put on the quality of school systems reflects the fact that as these people age, and likely engage in dedicated relationships with the potential for starting families, their concern for local schools increases dramatically. Attracting larger amounts of older graduates will depend heavily on the reputation of learning institutions and the presence of familial connections. These are factors more important to the older individual, who is more likely to be seeking settlement rather than a mobile existence.

Though ethnic diversity was of little importance to both alumni and current students, the fact that far more current students said “neutral” or “important” indicates that this topic is more frequently on students’ minds than in years past. It may not be a “deciding factor” for either group in choosing their location, but diversity is slowly becoming a subject of importance. It may be that in years to come, diversity becomes one of those factors that plays a role in choosing between two otherwise equally qualified areas.

The cross-tabulations suggest a positive relationship between the depth of interaction someone has with the city and the likeliness they are to see Bangor or the state of Maine as an “attractive” destination after graduation. The respondents who visited the city in low frequency had much more negative perceptions of the city than those who went more often. Coming to the city has the effect of “demythologizing” Bangor, separating hearsay from reality. The shift in perceptions of Bangor between those with and those without employment supports this notion. Roughly 10% of our student sample had paid or unpaid internships in Bangor, and 42% of them said that they are “likely” or “very likely” to settle in the area after graduation. Among the students who did not have a paid or unpaid internship, only 21% are “likely” or “very likely” to settle in Bangor. Therefore, students with internship experiences are *twice* as likely to settle in the area after they graduate.

As for students who had at least some work experience, (whether it was a full time or part time job, or an internship of some kind), 31% are “likely” or “very likely” to settle in the Bangor area after graduation. For those who had no work experience in the area, only 14% are “likely” or “very likely” to settle here. Again, we can see that students who have had some kind of work opportunity in Bangor are *twice* as likely to settle in the region compared to students who have had no work experience at all. These numbers are striking because only nine percent of the

student sample had held a paid or unpaid internship, but those who do hold internships are twice as likely to live in the region after graduation.

If the city hopes to attract and retain young professionals, campus communities must make the job opportunities available to current students more apparent and easy to access. A campaign targeted at promoting the knowledge of Bangor-based employment related to their department will be of great assistance. Greater exchange between the city and local universities could allow for collaboration on internship programs, whereby would work in Bangor for pay or college credit. This would help those students begin the process of networking, and then more likely stay in Bangor after graduation due to the social capital they have accumulated in the area.

Despite respondents' general perception that public transportation and diversity were the least important factors for moving, they were the two areas (aside from jobs) that were cited among the qualitative responses most often as needing improvement. Even though they are not seen as "important," respondents do see the city as lacking in these areas. Public transportation, while it may not be very important on the whole, is very important to that part of the population who relies on it as their primary source of transportation. Bangor's insufficiency in that area will be a big obstacle to those individuals moving to Bangor. Diversity too, while on average not seen as a "determining factor" for students or alumni in deciding where to move, was seen as distinctly lacking in the Bangor area, and improvements would increase the attractiveness of Bangor to some people.

## **7.1 Next Steps**

Based on our findings, we feel that focusing initial efforts on recent graduates and current University of Maine students is key to revitalizing Bangor. Absolutely central to attracting new, young professionals to the Bangor area is to find ways to make Bangor an appealing career

location. The City of Bangor has a large pool of opportunity in this realm given, its close proximity to the University of Maine. However, the problem of attracting students to visit Bangor and to potentially settle in the area is still a struggle. In order to best tap into this pool of professional opportunity, communications and collaboration between the University of Maine and City of Bangor must be increased and developed to not only accomplish the following suggestions, but to form new ideas and initiatives relating to city revitalization in the future. By collaborating with the University of Maine, Bangor would not only be tapping into a large source of student creativity and engagement, but would also be increasing exposure by showing more of what Bangor has to offer to current students. Together, these ideas make up the central theme of our suggestions: exposure to the city and increased career, job, and internship opportunities. Based on this, we would like to offer three short and long-term suggestions that the City of Bangor could take to move toward the goal of attracting young professionals to settle in the region. These suggestions are outlined as follows: brand the city and identify Bangor's "niche market," creating a Bangor-area job fair at the University of Maine, and encouraging collaboration between Bangor and University of Maine academic departments to create more internships for students.

### **Branding the City**

Our first step for this suggestion would be to encourage Bangor community members, citizens, community groups, and businesses alike, to brainstorm unique ways to brand the City of Bangor. This will be important in finding a way for Bangor to distinguish itself from other cities or regions in Maine, and crucial to helping Bangor find a "niche market." Bangor residents and community members know Bangor best, and therefore, are best positioned to determine what Bangor's key selling point to new residents or professionals might be. As this suggestion could

have lasting effects on Bangor's image and future, it would be important to involve any and all facets of life in Bangor to effectively determine what the city has to offer and be proud of. A "competition" mentality could effectively engage many Bangor residents in the branding process and could attract high levels of creativity, especially if some sort of incentive were to be offered to participants (for example, a cash prize).

In the spirit of collaboration between Bangor and the University of Maine, students could participate in the branding process as well. Students in Art, Communications, New Media, or Marketing could play a role here through a service learning approach. While students directly benefit from a unique course that further engages them and teaches them about how to effectively work with a community partner, Bangor would benefit from the development of new ideas and solutions for city branding. Although students may not know the city as well as current Bangor residents do, collaboration through a service learning approach would create many opportunities to address additional facets of this research, such as student exposure to Bangor and a stronger connection to the Bangor community. Another important component is that based on findings of this research, graduates are more likely to view Bangor as a less attractive destination as time goes on. If students can play a role in branding the city, it becomes much more likely that the city will be branded in a way that students will see it to be at least slightly more attractive than they would have previously. Assuming that students are effectively able to participate in the city branding process, a service learning approach would be an extremely cost effective method that produces benefits for both the students and the City of Bangor. The benefits of this approach could include the value of students' unique outside perspectives on what Bangor has to offer, and the creation of a more engaged student body that is enthusiastic about playing a role in a project to make Bangor better.

## **Bangor Area Job Fair at the University of Maine**

Because job opportunities have proved to be one of the most important factors weighing on the minds of recent college graduations, the creation of more jobs in the Bangor region is crucial to attracting graduates to stay in the area. We feel that one of the best ways to accomplish this would be through a streamlined process that presents as much information on job or career opportunities in Bangor as possible *directly* to students. Essentially, this would bring the job search to the students rather than the opposite. Again, by holding a job or career fair that focuses on work opportunities directly in the Bangor region, it would be much easier for students to become aware of these opportunities, which could make Bangor a much more attractive post-graduation destination. Rather than simply hoping that students will look to Bangor as a post-graduation destination, a Bangor area job fair would be a proactive measure on behalf of the city that would put Bangor on the radar of recent University of Maine graduates or current students. Students already interested in what Bangor has to offer would have a much easier time accessing these opportunities, and students who may not have considered Bangor as a viable option would suddenly have a much easier time accessing information that could potentially draw them to the area.

A job fair like this could involve a partnership with the University of Maine Career Center and any local Bangor region businesses or industries that wish to be involved. This job fair would be unique in that it focuses on a particular region and the varying career opportunities that it has to offer, rather than a particular industry or field of work like other job and career fairs currently held at the University of Maine. In this setting, students of a variety of different majors or work backgrounds could attend and apply for jobs while they are still undergraduates or for jobs post-graduation. Internships could also be included to increase student opportunity in

Bangor. To make this job fair a reality, we recommend first the solicitation of support from the University of Maine Career Center, and then using this support to assist with the solicitation of support and involvement from Bangor area businesses or industries. However, it is important to address the issue of students who use Bangor as a “stepping-stone” for future career and job opportunities in the future. Because of this, it would be necessary to create a framework in which students and recent graduates want to stay in the area and remain residents of Bangor.

### **Collaborative Internships Between Bangor and the University of Maine**

In a similar vein to the Bangor area job fair, we would like to suggest that Bangor seek out various collaborations between academic departments at the University of Maine to encourage the creation of internships for students in Bangor. One way to do this would be to have University department heads or department internship coordinators work with local businesses or groups like FUSION:Bangor to connect students with local internship and job opportunities. Although this strategy is similar to the Bangor area job fair suggestion, focusing on creating more internship opportunities is another example of a proactive measure that can be taken to attract students to the Bangor area before they even graduate. The invaluable community or work-related connections that students could make through an internship in Bangor could pay off by giving students more of a reason to settle in the area after they graduate. To repeat our findings, students with an internship experience are twice as likely to settle in the Bangor area, and yet only 10% of our student survey population had held an internship position. The overall value of networking and professional development opportunities that students can gain from an internship are important to growing Bangor’s younger professional demographic. Again, similar to the Bangor job area suggestion, it would be important to address issues of students using the



opportunity as a stepping-stone. While this problem may be largely unavoidable in some instances, it could be addressed by including more opportunities for student network and professional development in the Bangor area.

## **8.1 Conclusion**

Addressing Bangor's future through attracting young professionals to settle in the area is a daunting task. However, the results of this research present a hopeful outlook on Bangor's future, especially given that 61% of survey respondents stated that they would like to live in a small city. If Bangor takes the right approach, Bangor can easily be that city. Collaboration between the University of Maine and the City of Bangor will be central to the accomplishing of these goals. As students conducting this study, our collaboration with Bangor city councilors and stakeholders has proved to be an invaluable experience that demonstrates the importance of engaged research, creating room for student learning and community benefit to take place at the same time. Through our suggestions, we present three low-cost solutions that could serve as the foundation for a revitalized Bangor. While we acknowledge that these steps are merely the beginning of a larger and continued undertaking, we strongly believe that they can lay a solid foundation for further developments and success in attracting young professional to settle in the Bangor area.

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