

Meeting Notes

Community Kick-Off

The following notes represent the comments obtained during the brainstorming session. Participants were asked to write down anything that came to mind when thinking about Newburyport and each plan element.

Cultural Resources

Program Creation and Collaboration

- Create opportunities for collaborate programming (several comments)
- Create the infrastructure necessary to allow for collaborative programming
- Organize an event focused on the city's history and historic preservation
- Investigate partnerships with local schools and support connecting students to the community's history
- Promote the value of preservation
- Promote/encourage cultural diversity

Support/Expand Existing Cultural Resources

- Gift land to the Maritime Museum to allow for its expansion
- Expand the role of the Newburyport Archival Center to promote the historical heritage of the City through collaborations with other cultural resources
- Work toward achieving landmark status for the Newburyport Historic District
- Continue to encourage protection districts in the historic neighborhoods
- Expand music/arts programming in the schools

Create New Cultural Resources

- Construct an indoor/outdoor shipbuilding museum on the NRA and Custom House land
- Create a speaker series featuring a variety of topics ranging from cultural issues to current events to politics
- Encourage global tourism – promote Newburyport in a way as to attract tourists from around the globe.

Economic Development

Recruitment/Promotion/Job Creation

- Create a master plan for our economic engine so that a better way of promoting NBPT for economic development can be implemented

- Incorporate regional opportunities where the cooperative efforts will result in collective success
- Attract a local college or research center, e.g. focus on wetlands management and other local issues, which will bring intellectual capital to our city.
- What assets exist that can be better used to create new opportunities for making money and creating jobs?
- Craft a plan to bring in more “office-based” or white collar jobs, which would liven up downtown’s other businesses during year-round business days.
- Embrace the ideas outlined in the Commonwealth’s [Choosing to Compete](#) report – innovation, workforce development, etc.
- Attract knowledge-based companies (e.g. e-business) to come to NBPT
- Bring in a professional recruiter to attract businesses to NBPT

Business Development

- Create a step-by-step guide for those who would like to come to NBPT to open a new business
- Market NBPT as a creative economy
- Develop a plan looking ahead over the next 20 to 25 years to help the community focus on the sectors that will grow and be sustainable
- Encourage non-retail business, possibly education, that are not as susceptible to economic vacillation
- Encourage businesses that support the community’s needs, rather than baubles for tourists
- Create a local portfolio of businesses for investment – to keep our money local, “slow money”

Downtown/Waterfront

- Do not develop the central waterfront – this will harm the current downtown businesses plus it will eliminate why people visit the city.
- Investigate a [Marche du Vieux-Port](#) type facility for the waterfront
- Create a wayfinding program that incorporates all of the communities assets that will direct residents and tourists to all of the areas of interest (e.g. open space, waterfront, downtown shopping, rail trail, etc.)
- Create hotel and conference facilities

Industrial Park

- Revise the zoning in the industrial park (to allow more uses that will not negatively impact those already existing)

Train Station/Rt. 1 Rotary

- Add a Zip car to the train station
- Allow “Paris height” building on State Street, south of High leading to the Circle District
- Focus efforts on the redevelopment of this area

Storey Avenue

- Clean the area up, reduce signage, enhance the aesthetics

Other

- Use the Historical Heritage of NBPT to promote tourism
- Eliminate poverty in NBPT

Education

Partnerships

- Create partnerships between the public schools, colleges and businesses (many comments on this)
- Three year high school and community college in town
- Alternative school within the traditional public school
- Create a way for residents without children to be a part of the educational system
- Improve/create opportunities for high school work study programs with local businesses
- Have exchanges with schools in Lawrence/Haverhill – both students and teachers

Funding

- Ensure adequate funding (several comments)
- Fund after school programs
- More accountability

Curriculum

- Arts education, music education
- Foreign language
- Need a well-articulated PK-12+ STEM program (several comments)

Capital Needs

- Increase the maintenance of City's school buildings
- Create a Capital Plan (several comments)

Energy and Sustainability

Environment/Sustainability

- Sea level rise and storm surge
- Create a Climate Change Adaptation Plan

- Create criteria for what is considered sustainable
- Work toward zero waste

Energy

- Energy independence and net zero consumer
- Underground electrical distribution, 10% over 10 years – “Power Corridors” as roads are redone or new ones are built
- Solar on rooftops – both residential and commercial
- Use compost to generate energy (anaerobic digestion)
- Energy aggregator/virtual municipal utility

Waste

- Restaurants compost their organic waste
- Organic composting

Community/Education

- Continue authentic projects with students through school partnerships, green teams and other programs
- Make Newburyport plastic bag and Styrofoam free
- Electric automobile charging stations
- Intersection of historic preservation and energy efficiency – finding a way to increase efficiency in a historically-sensitive manner
- Bike paths/bike sharing/bike rentals (like in Boston)
- Complete Streets
- Firewood from DPS tree removals

Housing

Housing Diversity

- Encourage a diversity in housing sizes, including in-law apartments
- Develop programs that protect neighborhood diversity and prevent gentrification
- Create a broad range of housing for all incomes, including middle class incomes
- Investigate multi-generational housing opportunities
- Provide sufficient housing for seniors with a focus on single-floor living spaces
- Investigate micro-housing
- Investigate opportunities for village housing for elders

Affordable Housing

- Create affordable housing
- Preserve and develop affordable housing that serves a wide range of incomes

- Disperse affordable housing among market-rate housing so that the city is not divided into neighborhoods based on wealth
- Continue to integrate affordable housing into the City's neighborhoods
- Preserve and promote economic diversity through providing affordable housing and controlling condo conversions
- Provide sufficient affordable housing as required ([Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40B](#))

Homelessness

- Collaborate with local groups and agencies who are addressing the issues of homelessness and housing

Other

- Curb the overdevelopment of housing through the limiting of the population size to what the City's schools and water/sewer/etc. can reasonably sustain

Land Use and Development

Connectivity

- How do we connect waterfront west to the downtown?
- Carve out a greenbelt/bike trail – an attractive way to town?
- Develop a plaza connecting Merrimac Street to waterfront (west lot)

Parks, Waterfront and Open Spaces

- Keep the waterfront open (several comments) – it is already connected to the downtown
- Make Cashman Park more attractive (plant shrubs, trees, benches, etc.) – connect with the Trolley Service
- Better use and design of Cashman Park
- Preserve our remaining open spaces, maintain them
- Continue to promote protection and agriculture use in the Common Pasture to protect the watershed and prevent flooding

Development

- As we consider new development of waterfront/new housing – how do we address needs of those with no off-street parking (in particular during snow emergencies)
- Curb the “max-out” of multi-unit lots
- Use great care when mixing business and residential future development in our already-thriving industrial park
- Constructive reuse of Crow Lane landfill site (energy generation)?
- Infill controls

- New England Development owns a large parcel of property – how do we link their plans into a “master” vision?
- As development occurs, analysis focused on future sea level rise and storm surge should be considered
- All new construction should have traffic studies conducted, especially thinking about the City’s gateways and how many vehicles will be coming in and out of the City.

Zoning

- Rezone the industrial park and the transition to it (i.e. the bordering parcels).
- Better use of the industrial park

Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation

Waterfront

- No development on the waterfront (many comments regarding keeping the waterfront open)
- Open waterfront is essential for economic viability and quality of residents’ life
- Create a fair and reasonable plan to keep our central waterfront open
- Picnic tables on the waterfront and the Mall
- 2003 waterfront plan was good – more park, less cars
- Consider waterfront open space as a ribbon-style park from Rt. 1 (waterfront west) to oldies one continuous park
- Create a sound plan to beautify and pay for a finished waterfront

Parks/Recreation

- Finish Market Landing Park and landscape parking with no additional buildings
- Create a public/private partnership for open space/park support
- More park funding in the budget
- Build a community swimming pool and day camp – possibly in the industrial park (many comments regarding building a community pool)
- Improve the beauty and usefulness of Cashman Park
- Create a bicycle route from downtown to Plum Island
- Develop a trail system in Common Pasture and work to obtain lands (or easements) to enlarge it
- Create a trail-based dog park where dogs can run off-leash

Open Space and Natural Resources

- Preservation of our natural resources
- Need to preserve our open spaces, including the open waterfront
- Trash/litter on roads, beaches and marshes is a big problem

- Encourage protection of Common Pasture to protect the watershed and encourage agricultural use

Other

- Outlaw/ban/tax plastic bags and bottles – if these are in the trash, they last 450 years
- De-clutter all vistas, bury power lines and minimize signage
- Plan for sea level rise on the waterfront, the industrial park and Plum Island
- Create a web-based resource for coordinating volunteers

Public Facilities and Services

Industrial Park

- Provide additional funding to DPS to allow for effective clean-out of the drainage swales

Infrastructure and Maintenance

- Ensure that City employees are fully educated regarding sea level rise and are prepared for potential issues (many comments)
- Keep the handicap spaces clear of obstructions and snow
- Create maintenance plans for each of the City's municipal buildings

Sidewalks

- The Sidewalk Master Plan should be its own stand-alone document that is fully implemented (many comments)
- Create a system to allow for public input about priority sidewalks that need improvements
- Investigate ways to increase the safety of sidewalks
- Investigate ways to increase the consistency of sidewalk snow removal in the downtown

Roads

- Focus on road and sidewalk improvements
- Pine Hill Road needs significant repair, which is very necessary since this road is actively traversed by all
- Improve speed control measure on streets
- Crosswalks need to be safer

Utilities

- Bury utility lines underground (many comments)
- Improve the taste of the city's water
- What is the maximum capacity of the city's water and sewer systems? Are we nearing this maximum?

Other

- Create a dog park with longer off-leash hours as well as allow off-leash time on Plum Island
- Build a public boat facility at Cashman Park
- Mandate traffic studies for new facilities
- Plan and coordinate improvements/upgrades/maintenance of streets, bike lanes, sidewalks and tree plantings
- Build year-round restrooms on Merrimac Street, at the edge of the central waterfront utilizing the same footprint as that of the existing building

Transportation and Circulation

Pedestrians

- Better walkability, especially in the neighborhoods (several comments)
- Establish a “safe route to school” for children (several comments)
- Keep sidewalks clear of snow/ice
- Create a program for scheduled maintenance of sidewalks
- Better access to train station

Non-Motorized Vehicles

- Complete the Rail Trail
- Establish a bicycle rental system like that in Boston
- Formalize and maintain existing bike lanes
- Formalize the “Middle Way”, which is the route drivers take through the side streets that connect Low Street to Merrimac Street – make safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Public Transit

- Increase local transportation options, e.g. shuttle service to Plum Island, shopping areas, trolleys into and out of downtown, etc. (several comments)
- Weekend summer season shuttle service from the downtown to the Plum Island beaches, which can be supported by charging users a modest fair
- Boat shuttle from NBPT to Amesbury and Salisbury (several comments)
- Put a zip car at the train station
- Create a bus route between High, Marlboro, and Water Streets to the Market Basket shopping center

Parking

- Would like to see us consider satellite areas as well as downtown areas

- Incorporate private parking during peak events and the use of buses to shuttle event participants
- Construct a central parking garage that can support current and future downtown development
- How can we work with the other Master Plan groups to project out the parking needs over the course of the next ten years?
- Any new buildings should include electrical conduits for electric car charging stations
- Work with the MBTA to allow overnight parking at the train station

Traffic

- Impose traffic calming measures on Storey Ave, between Atkinson Common and Low Street (several comments)
- Address truck traffic into and out of the industrial park
- Develop comprehensive traffic plans before projects are allowed to be constructed.