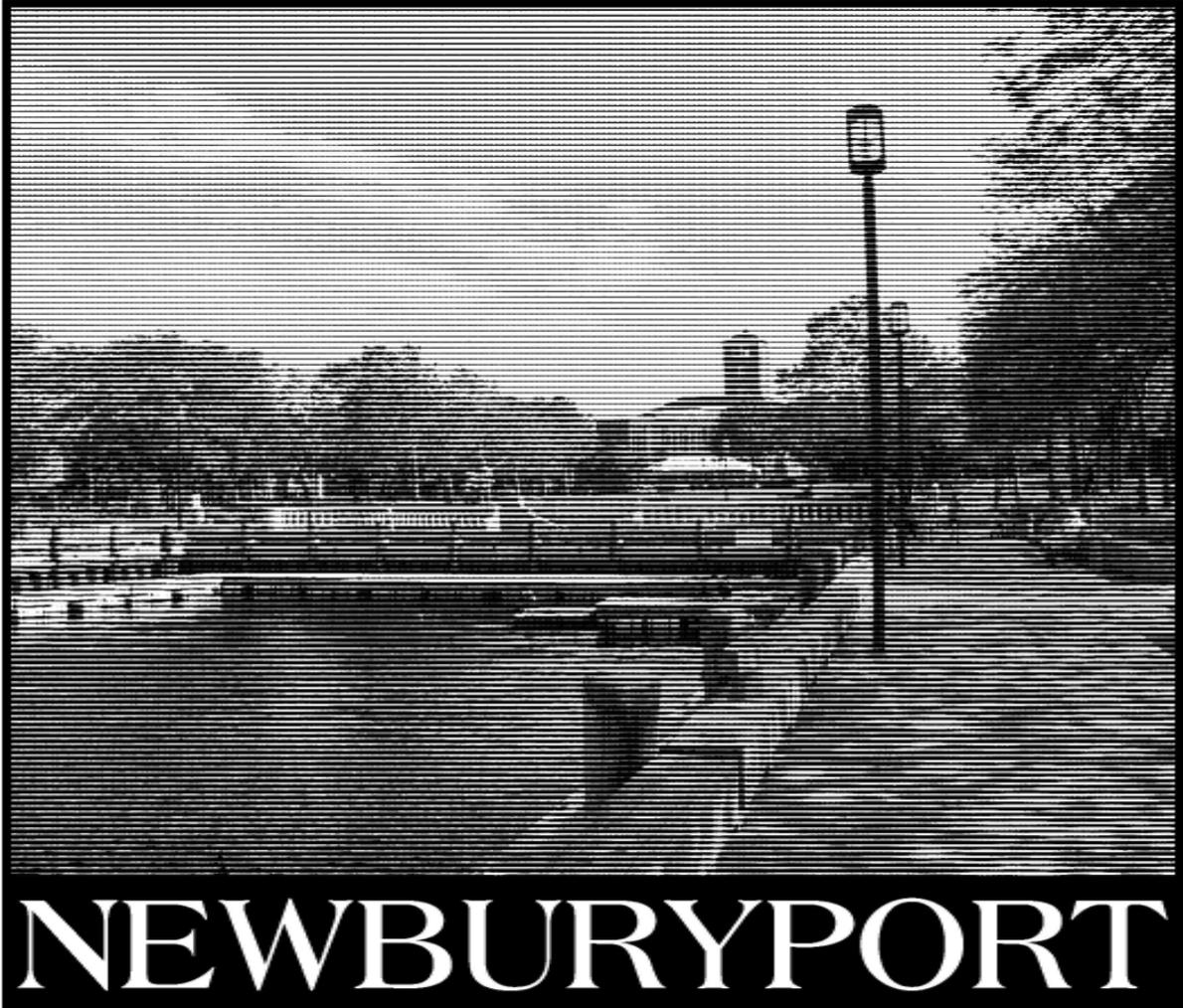


NEWBURYPORT MASTER PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2001



NEWBURYPORT

Shaping Our Future, Honoring Our Past

City of Newburyport, Massachusetts

Lisa L. Mead, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Nancy T. Colbert, Director

Consulting Assistance By
Taintor & Associates, Inc.
and
Community Planning Solutions

Newburyport Master Plan

City Council

C. Bruce Brown
Erford C. Fowler
Karen J. Kelley
Alan P. Lavender

Audrey McCarthy
John F. Norris
Thomas F. O'Brien
John W. Pramberg

Bert H. G. Reed
Joseph F. Spaulding
Brenda L. Swartz

Planning Board

Daniel Bowie
Steven Cashman
Peter DeMaranville

Fred Habib
Douglas Locy
Deborah MacKinnon

Madeline Nash
David Russell
Ronald Waite

Master Plan Steering Committee

Lisa L. Mead, Mayor
Nancy T. Colbert, Planning Director
Karen Bresnahan

Karen J. Kelley, City Council
Fred Habib, Planning Board
Jim Gaines

Master Plan Task Forces

Bill Abbott
Mary Ann Abbott
Kent Allen
Linda Besse
Gloria Braunhardt
Alice Brown
Lea Cabeen
Jane Carolan
Sue Christ
Brian Clancy
Bob Cook
Art Currier
Nancy DiGrezio
Barbara Dowd
Joanne Foley
Steve Fraser

Tom Horth
Gary Karelis
Nana Kennedy
Larry Kiszka
Ann Lagasse
Stuart Landers
George Lawler
Jim Lynam
John Moak
Kate Murray
Madeline Nash
Jim Nelson
Paula Newcomb
Bill O'Flaherty
Bill Piercey
Donn Pollard

Bob Puff
Ed Ramsdell
Richard Rogers
Martha Solish
Bonnie Sontag
Rod Southwick
Bill Steelman
Robert Stevenson
James Stiles
Dick Sullivan Jr.
Scott Sutherland
Marilyn Teel
Judy Tymon
Paul Van Der Wielen
David Vine
Jonathan Woodman

Consultants

Taintor & Associates, Inc.

Cambridge Hill Partners

Community Planning Solutions

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
What Is a Master Plan?.....	1
The Planning Process.....	1
Organization of the Master Plan.....	2
Principles, Goals, Policies, Strategies and Actions	4
A Vision for Newburyport’s Future	5
Guiding Principles	7
Priorities for Action.....	9
The Central Riverfront	9
The Industrial Park	10
Residential Subdivisions.....	12
Infill Development in Older Neighborhoods	13
Affordable Housing	14
Preservation of Newburyport’s Historic Character.....	14
Infrastructure Investments	15
Land Use	17
Land Use Challenges and Opportunities.....	17
Land Use Goals, Policies and Strategies.....	18
Housing	23
Housing Challenges and Opportunities	23
Housing Goals, Policies and Strategies	24
Economic Development	27
Economic Development Challenges and Opportunities.....	27
Economic Development Goals, Policies and Strategies.....	28
Natural and Cultural Resources	31
Natural and Cultural Resources Challenges and Opportunities.....	31
Natural and Cultural Resources Goals, Policies and Strategies.....	32
Open Space and Recreation	35
Open Space and Recreation Challenges and Opportunities.....	35
Open Space and Recreation Goals, Policies and Strategies.....	36
Public Facilities and Services.....	39
Public Facilities and Services Challenges and Opportunities.....	39
Public Facilities and Services Goals, Policies and Strategies.....	40

Transportation and Circulation	43
Transportation and Circulation Challenges and Opportunities	43
Transportation and Circulation Goals, Policies and Strategies	44
Master Plan Implementation	47
Master Plan Implementation Challenges and Opportunities.....	47
Master Plan Implementation Goals, Policies and Strategies.....	48
Implementation Program.....	51
Planning.....	51
Organization and Management.....	51
Zoning	52
Non-Zoning Regulations	53
Acquisition	53
Investment	53
Priority Strategies.....	54
Addressing Industrial Park Growth and Access Issues.....	55
Action Plan	57
Introduction.....	57
Actions Listed by Priority	57
Actions Listed by Strategy	77

INTRODUCTION

What Is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a policy guide and a framework for future land use and development. It includes assessments of existing resources and issues, projections of future conditions and needs, and consideration of community goals and desires. In other words, a Master Plan describes what the community is like today and what direction it should go in the future. The Master Plan's purpose is to enable municipal officials to better manage change, and to inform residents and businesses about the community's characteristics, trends and policies.

The Master Plan can play an important role in the ongoing work of City officials and agencies. As a statement of long-range goals and policies, the Master Plan provides a consistent point of reference for evaluating and prioritizing potential actions. In addition, the data and analysis contained in the Plan can be used for documentation in funding applications as well as for monitoring change over time. In order to ensure that the Master Plan continues to provide these positive impacts, all City departments should be charged with periodically reviewing the Plan in relation to their areas of responsibility, reporting on progress in meeting Master Plan goals, and advising the Planning Board as to ways in which the Master Plan should be amended to respond to changing conditions.

The Master Plan should be closely integrated with other municipal planning documents, including the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan, Water System Master Plan, and Wastewater Management Plan. As any of these documents is updated or revised, the Master Plan should be updated to reflect these changes. Conversely, the Master Plan should serve as a guide to other City agencies in planning for investments, acquisitions, and provision of services.

Since the Master Plan focuses on the City's physical development, the zoning ordinance and other land use regulations are essential tools for implementing the Plan's recommendations. Under Massachusetts law, it is the responsibility of the Planning Board to adopt and amend the Master Plan, but the City Council enacts the zoning ordinance as well as appropriating funds for municipal activities. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Council and Board to work together to ensure that policies and actions are not in conflict.

The Planning Process

This document presents the core of Newburyport's Master Plan, a set of goals, policies and strategies that together describe a direction for the City for the next twenty years. The Master Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with, and participation by, the City's residents and public officials. This process has included:

- ◆ five broadly representative task forces, which together held approximately 50 meetings between July 2000 and May 2001;
- ◆ interviews with City officials and individuals with knowledge of local development issues;
- ◆ six public meetings in the autumn of 2000, focusing on specific aspects of the Master Plan, and two additional meetings in the winter and spring of 2001 to review interim recommendations; and
- ◆ three meetings with the City Council and Planning Board.

Along with this public process, the Master Plan has also been informed by a detailed analysis of existing conditions and trends affecting the City. The results of this analysis have been documented in

the baseline report, entitled *Existing Conditions, Trends and Challenges* (January 2001). The baseline report compiles the most current available data on land use, housing, economic development, natural resources, open space, public facilities and transportation and circulation; and includes estimates of the amount of potential future development (“buildout analysis”) and projections of growth in population and demand for services.

As important as the data and analysis are, they only describe the City’s current conditions. The Master Plan’s goals and policies chart a course for the City’s future, with an emphasis on land use and physical form; and the implementation strategies describe specific actions that should be taken to follow this course. The goals, policies and strategies evolved through a series of interim reports and opportunities for public review and input:

- ◆ The first of these documents, entitled *Vision, Goals and Priorities*, was drafted in January 2001. The goals in this report were presented to a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Board and then to a public workshop in which residents participated in small-group discussions of the Master Plan’s various topic areas.
- ◆ Based on the feedback received at these meetings, the goals and strategies were modified and then reissued in March 2001 as *Goals, Policies and Strategies*, which is the foundation of the current Master Plan document. The revised goals and strategies were presented to a second joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Board, followed by another public forum.
- ◆ Task Force leaders then reported to the Master Plan Steering Committee with suggested changes and additions, based on the input that they gathered from the March public forum as well as their Task Forces’ deliberations. This resulted in a listing of *Revised Goals, Policies and Strategies*, issued in June 2001. This document was provided to the City Council, Planning Board and Task Force members, and was discussed at a third joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Board. Also at this time, the recipients were asked to identify the ten most important strategies on which to work immediately, based on their participation in the planning process and their discussions with other City residents.
- ◆ A final review by the Steering Committee led to some additional changes to goals and strategies, and the responses to the ranking questionnaire provided input for prioritizing strategies for implementation. This *Master Plan* document is the result of that process.

This extensive process of review and revision has been invaluable in helping the Steering Committee and consultants to craft a Master Plan that reflects local needs and priorities.

Organization of the Master Plan

The remainder of this document consists of five parts. The first part, “A Vision for Newburyport’s Future,” presents an overview of the positive trends and changes that residents envision for the City, and that this Master Plan is intended to support and promote.

The next short section lists three overarching “Guiding Principles” for the Master Plan. These are very broad statements that emphasize the importance of three elements in achieving and maintaining a healthy community: environmental quality, economic vitality, and social equity. To the extent that any one of these elements is missing, the community will be the poorer. As the implementation of the Master Plan moves forward, it will be important to keep an eye on the balance among these elements. (It is noteworthy that each of these guiding principles is reflected in at least one of the nine top priority strategies in the Implementation Program.)

The third section is an overview of the major planning issues facing the City, as determined from the public participation process and existing conditions analysis. These issues relate to specific key areas where the City can intervene and frame future development and change. The key issues are not meant

to be comprehensive—there are other broad areas which the Master Plan addresses—but they are especially important because they are areas where change is occurring and where strategic action by the City can have a meaningful impact.

The fourth section presents goals, policies and strategies organized under seven headings: land use, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, facilities and services, and transportation and circulation. The goals are based largely on community input and are meant to reflect Newburyport residents’ broad desires for the City’s future; while the policies state recommended positions for the City to take in response to these goals. Finally, the strategies (and their supporting actions, described in the Action Plan) describe specific measures that the City can take to further the goals and policies. The goals, policies and strategies are the core of the Master Plan.

The last chapter of this document is the Implementation Program. This section outlines the variety of ways in which the Master Plan can be implemented. The Master Plan is focused primarily on land use and physical form, and therefore land use regulations as established in the Zoning Ordinance are primary tools for implementation. However, the range of tools also extends to non-zoning regulations, land acquisition, and public facility investment. It is important to recognize as well that planning, organization and management play an important part in implementing municipal goals.

Finally, the recommended implementation actions for the Master Plan are set forth in *Volume Two: Action Plan*. The Action Plan presents all strategies with their supporting actions in two lists: one organized according to functional area (e.g., Land Use, Housing, etc.), and the other according to the strategies’ priority for implementation.



Principles, Goals, Policies, Strategies and Actions

The Master Plan includes a hierarchy of principles, goals, policies, and implementation strategies and actions.

- ◆ **Guiding Principles:** At the foundation of the Master Plan are three overarching *principles* that apply to all aspects of the City's development. These principles are based on the concept of *sustainable development*, under which environmental quality, economic vitality, and social equity are interrelated, equally important components.
- ◆ **Goals:** The next level in the hierarchy consists of the *goals*, which are broad statements framed to indicate a desired future condition for the City. The goals are organized according to the seven functional elements of the Master Plan: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Natural and Cultural Resources, Open Space and Recreation, Public Facilities and Services, and Transportation and Circulation. In addition, a separate set of goals has been defined with respect to implementation of the Master Plan.
- ◆ **Policies:** The third level consists of *policy* statements that define the City's position on specific issues related to an individual goal. These policy statements define recommended positions for the City to take in response to the goals: in other words, what approach the City should take to specific issues in support of the goals.
- ◆ **Strategies and Actions:** The last level consists of *strategy* statements. The strategies are specific measures that the City can take to implement the goals. As noted in the previous section, these measures can include enacting regulations, acquiring land, developing new public facilities or improving new ones, hiring personnel, and so forth. In some cases, these strategies are supported by more specific *action* recommendations, which break the strategies down into smaller steps. These actions are enumerated in the *Action Plan*, which is Volume Two of the Master Plan.

Finally, where possible, *indicators* have been identified which can be used to measure the effectiveness of policies and progress toward the Master Plan goals.

A VISION FOR NEWBURYPORT'S FUTURE

Shaping Our Future, Honoring Our Past

Newburyport enters the twenty-first century with a rich heritage, a vibrant economy, an active citizenry, and a strong sense of community. In the next twenty years, the City will build upon these strengths, extending the benefits of its recent revitalization throughout the community while carefully stewarding its natural and cultural resources. This vision of the City's future is summed up in the Master Plan's slogan—*Shaping Our Future, Honoring Our Past*.

Newburyport's downtown will continue to serve as the civic, service and commercial focus of the City. Over the next two decades, the downtown economy will expand modestly to serve a growing local and regional population. This economic growth will be accompanied by an increase in the amount of public parkland along the riverfront, and it will be supported by new off-street parking facilities carefully designed to blend in with the fabric of the built environment. The downtown will continue to be a walkable district, and traffic improvements will be sensitive to pedestrian needs and to the area's historic urban context.

The City will continue to support a thriving arts and cultural community. In the downtown area, museums, galleries, shops, stages, clubs, streets, sidewalks and parks will provide a variety of settings for many and diverse exhibits, performances and concerts. These amenities and activities will help make the downtown a lively gathering place throughout the day, the week and the year.

Newburyport's historical, cultural and recreational resources will continue to attract visitors from outside the region. These visitors will provide the critical mass necessary to support a high level of services and cultural activities relative to the City's population base, thereby enhancing the quality of life for residents of the City.

Outside the downtown, commercial and industrial areas will have clear boundaries and will exhibit a high quality of design, even though more contemporary than in the historic areas. The range of business types will be maintained or expanded to serve residents' shopping and service needs.

Paralleling the moderate growth in housing and population, industrial growth will provide tax revenues needed to support public services and facilities for residents. The industrial park area will build on its current strengths, including its convenient location and its separation from residential areas; while improved connections to the regional highway system will enhance the value of the

industrial districts, and will allow for new development with minimal neighborhood impacts. This area will also be enhanced by the creation of pathways along the Little River and elsewhere that will help knit this area together with other parts of the City. Merrimac Street and portions of the waterfront will continue to host smaller industrial uses, especially those related to water-dependent uses.

Newburyport will continue to honor its heritage through its programs and investments designed to protect historic resources, maintain traditional neighborhoods, and promote heritage tourism. Through outreach and education, residents and visitors will gain a better understanding of the City's cultural and historic resources, which will enhance community preservation efforts. The City's traditional neighborhoods around the central core will continue to be revitalized, while preserving the diversity that makes them interesting and inviting places to live—a diversity of people as well as of physical structures.

The quality of City's exceptional natural resources will be improved through strong development review, land use management, and infrastructure maintenance. Facilities for passive and active recreation will keep pace with changes in population, and open space will be preserved to protect habitat and preserve scenic views.

In summary, the vision of Newburyport in 2020 is not much different from the City of today. With the completion of some strategically important projects—including the reuse of the NRA parking lots, creation of expanded downtown parking facilities, the Plum Island water and sewer project, and several open space and recreational corridor projects—Newburyport will address some key issues, further protect its natural and cultural resources, and strengthen its foundation for the future.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Master Plan is guided by three overarching principles, emphasizing the importance of environmental quality, economic vitality and social equity in maintaining a healthy community.

Guiding Principle 1 – Environmental Quality

Preserve and protect the environmental, cultural, historic and community resources that have come to define Newburyport.

Guiding Principle 2 – Economic Vitality

Ensure that growth is balanced and measured, and consistent with Newburyport's historic development pattern and natural environment, in order to maintain the City's economic and fiscal health and the quality of life of its residents.

Guiding Principle 3 – Social Equity

Foster and respect Newburyport's socioeconomic diversity, giving consideration to the needs of lower-income and fixed-income residents.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The Central Riverfront

Without question, the most important land use challenge facing the City is the future of the downtown waterfront and its relationship to the central business district. This area has been the subject of extensive discussion and debate within the community. Currently, the central riverfront provides abundant long-term parking for visitors, shoppers and businesses. However, the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority's West Lot, between the Firehouse and Green Street, is a large undefined space that contrasts unfavorably with the adjacent Waterfront Park and the historic scale of the downtown area just beyond the Firehouse. The lot also creates a break in the continuity of the streetscape and an artificial and unattractive edge to the downtown district.



While the parking spaces that are provided in this lot are necessary to support the vitality of the central business district, they do not need to be provided in this location. The parking spaces can and should be provided in one or more sites that are further from the waterfront so that this key area can reach its full potential for adding to Newburyport's quality of life.



A policy decision has been made that most of the central waterfront should become public open space. The City is now conducting a Waterfront Feasibility Study that will explore how to accomplish this goal. This study will look at the question of developing a small amount of commercial space that would complement the neighboring buildings and help to underwrite the cost of park expansion.

In order to achieve the goal of providing more public open space along the riverfront, new parking facilities must be created to compensate for the loss of spaces in the NRA's waterfront lots and to support new commercial development in the central business district. A significant portion of these needed spaces can be provided in a new parking structure, the construction of which should be an immediate priority for the City.



On a larger scale, the appearance and functioning of the entire downtown waterfront between Route 1 and Joppa Park should be examined. Issues in this

area include the creation or improvement of pedestrian and vehicular circulation links as well as siting and design of new development. The downtown waterfront design guidelines developed in 1997 provide a solid basis for such an examination.



Related to the issues about land use and development along the downtown waterfront, residents are concerned about access along the length of the Merrimack River, from Maudslay State Park to the Plum Island Reservation. The concept of continuous linear access to the riverfront has been raised: in other words, extending the concept of the downtown boardwalk east toward Plum Island and west past Cashman Park. Given that much of the land is already developed for private uses, achieving this objective may be difficult and expensive. However, where new development or redevelopment is proposed the City can work incrementally toward this end through the Chapter 91 process, which regulates development on filled tidelands; and the City is in fact already working in this direction.



The Industrial Park

For at least three decades the area bordering Interstate 95 on the west and the Town of Newbury on the south has been designated for industrial use. During the 1990s the City reaffirmed this designation when it created the new Industrial B zoning district. Continued growth in the industrial park area has been encouraged in order to maintain a balance between residential and nonresidential development, to provide jobs for area residents, and to provide a growing source of property tax revenues to support the increasing demands on school, library and other services caused by population growth.



In several community meetings for the Master Plan, some residents urged that the City re-examine this policy. The reasons advanced in support of a policy change include protection of water quality in the Little River (and, by extension, environmental and ecological protection in the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge); preservation of open space for passive recreation; and concern that business expansion cannot be maintained in the face of regional labor shortages. There were also questions about the extent to which existing natural features and current environmental regulations would limit any future development in this area, which is bisected by the

Little River and contains numerous areas of wetlands and floodplains.

Economic development and environmental protection need not be mutually exclusive. With careful planning, this area should be able to support some additional growth without significant adverse impacts on the environment. Areas that currently are protected through the Wetlands Protection Act and other environmental regulations should be mapped and compared to the existing industrial zoning. The trail being developed by the Parker River Clean Water Association, running 3.5 miles along the Little River from Storey Avenue to the MBTA station, can help integrate open space, recreation, and natural resource protection objectives while enhancing the quality and attractiveness of the industrial park.

In this context, development of the remaining vacant parcels that are zoned for industrial use should continue to be pursued, with consideration for environmental protection, public safety, and neighborhood impacts. Detailed analyses of buildout capacity should be carried out on a site-specific basis, and buffer areas protecting residential neighborhoods and sensitive natural resources should be carefully delineated. The zoning regulations for the industrial districts should be revised to ensure that use and intensity standards are appropriate for these areas. Finally, a physical master plan of the entire area should be created which integrates conservation, recreation, development, and transportation issues.

An important complement to land use and economic development planning in the industrial park area involves providing improved access to this area. From Interstate 95, vehicles can access the industrial park via Storey Avenue (Exit 57) or Scotland Road (Exit 56). Vehicles using Exit 57 from the north often use Turkey Hill Road and Hale Street (rather than Low Street) to reach the industrial park, which impacts the residential neighborhoods along Turkey Hill Road. For a number of years the City has been considering creation of a new access route from Interstate 95 utilizing the former I-95 right-of-way. The purpose of this proposal has been to accommodate traffic to the industrial districts while reducing existing traffic impacts on nearby residential neighborhoods—in particular, providing an alternative to the Turkey Hill Road/Hale Street route. During the Master Plan public participation process



many residents raised objections to this proposal, and advocated leaving the former right-of-way as permanent open space.

It became clear that consensus to resolve this issue could not be attained within the limited time frame of the planning process. Therefore, the Master Plan does not take a position on the specific means of improving access to the industrial park area; rather, it recommends a strategy for resolving the issue in an open, public process, and recommends that this strategy be a top priority for immediate action upon adoption of the Master Plan.



Residential Subdivisions

With its outstanding natural resources, its vibrant and historic central business district, and its excellent highway and rail access, Newburyport has become an extremely attractive community in which to live. Developers are building subdivisions with large houses designed for the upper-income families who can afford them. Residents have expressed two concerns about these new subdivisions. First, the new homes in these developments sometimes appear to be sited and designed without consideration for their context: for example, some developments ignore the scale of surrounding neighborhoods or the characteristically close and consistent relationship of houses to the street. The second concern has to do with the loss of open space as these subdivisions are developed. Residents are concerned that further development will consume the remaining large open spaces, and will thus transform the character of the surrounding areas.



At least two mechanisms are potentially available to address these issues. At community meetings, residents have spoken out strongly in favor of a residential design review procedure that would provide more opportunity for public input into the design of subdivisions and new homes. Such a design review process should be considered, particularly for the City's older neighborhoods where infill development should be consistent with the scale and design of surrounding homes.



To address the concern about the loss of open space, the City already has in place provisions to encourage "cluster residential subdivisions," which allow a greater density on one portion of a tract of land in exchange for permanently reserving the balance of

the land as open space. The permanent open space may be used for conservation or recreation purposes, and may either be publicly accessible or reserved for the residents of the subdivision. The existing cluster development standards should be reviewed and enhanced if necessary, and developers should be strongly encouraged to use this approach where possible and appropriate.

To enhance the effectiveness of the cluster development approach, the City should identify key open space linkages and sensitive resources, so that preferred open space areas can be identified before a development proposal gets to the review stage.

Infill Development in Older Neighborhoods

Newburyport's attractive location and amenities have made it extremely desirable as a residential community not only for suburbanites moving to new subdivisions in the western part of the City, but also (and perhaps even more so) for those seeking an urban living environment in the older neighborhoods of the South End and North End. However, some of these new immigrants want more living space than is provided by the existing housing stock, and they therefore purchase an existing building and either expand it or replace it with a larger structure. In other cases, lots that exceed the minimum zoning requirement are being used more intensively, either through conversions of single-family homes to multiple dwelling units, or through division of the lot and construction of a new dwelling.

The cumulative result of all these individual actions is an increase in the physical density of the neighborhood. Although the extent of this increase in density has not been quantified, some residents believe that it is becoming a serious issue that threatens the character of these neighborhoods. There is also a concern about the loss of historic resources as older structures are removed to make way for larger ones. Finally, increased rates of vehicle ownership by existing and new residents alike means that neighborhood streets are increasingly congested.

To address these concerns, residents have suggested a number of strategies for the City to consider. These include creation of one or more Local Historic Districts to protect significant neighborhoods or groups of structures; adoption of a demolition delay ordi-



nance to allow for public review before significant buildings are demolished; and adoption of an ordinance to address the so-called “monster home” phenomenon, in which new structures that are greatly out of scale with their surroundings are inserted into a neighborhood. The Master Plan provides recommendations regarding these and related strategies.



Affordable Housing

The City of Newburyport has experienced a rapid revitalization over the past 30 years. Areas of the City that were dilapidated have been restored through substantial rehabilitation, and housing values in these neighborhoods have increased significantly. With few starter homes under \$150,000, opportunities for first-time homebuyers are limited and many city natives have been forced to move to neighboring communities in search of affordable housing. Rents, which had dropped substantially during the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s, have regained, with an estimated 15 percent increase just from April 1995 through January 1996.



The affluent individuals and families who are moving into Newburyport are bringing new investment and energy into the community. However, if those of more modest means can no longer afford to live in the City, Newburyport will lose much of the economic diversity and generational continuity that have made it such a vital community.

Providing a meaningful response to the housing affordability problem will take a significant level of effort and funding. The Master Plan recommends a variety of strategies to help address this issue, including adoption of an inclusionary zoning ordinance, provision of incentives for developers to incorporate affordable housing, use of surplus City property to create homeownership opportunities, and support for the efforts of non-profit organizations to create affordable housing.



Preservation of Newburyport's Historic Character

Newburyport has earned a justly deserved reputation for the City's commitment to preservation of its historic character, yet there are in fact few regulatory controls to enforce this commitment: in fact, some

aspects of the City’s Zoning Ordinance actually prohibit development that conforms to historic relationships between buildings and streets. As property values in the traditional urban neighborhoods rise, there is more pressure to renovate, expand and/or replace existing structures, and residents are increasingly concerned about the impact that this is having on the integrity of these neighborhoods.

Several potential strategies are available to address these concerns. The *Zoning Ordinance* should be amended to promote building setbacks and other features that are consistent with the established neighborhood character. A *Design Review* ordinance would supplement the mandatory dimensional regulations and site plan review provisions, allowing for review of building design elements in relation to recommended guidelines and/or required standards. Creation of one or more *Local Historic Districts* would provide strict design review using standards developed by local residents and based on the district’s existing architecture.

With respect to the public realm—streets, sidewalks, lighting, utilities, trees—*design standards* could be developed to guide municipal departments in design, construction and maintenance. The design standards created for the downtown waterfront area in 1997 is a good example of this approach.

Infrastructure Investments

Newburyport is in the midst of a major capital investment program. Projects recently completed or currently under way include the renovation and expansion of the Library, the reconstruction of the High School, the restoration of the historic landscaping of Bartlett Mall, and numerous street and utility projects. Additional projects are in various stages of planning, including the extension of water and sewer lines to Plum Island, the creation of multi-use trails along abandoned rail lines, the possible expansion of Waterfront Park and reuse of the NRA parking lots, and the construction of a municipal parking garage. Future needs will include renovation and/or expansion of the elementary and middle schools, provision of additional capacity for the public water supply system, and improvements to the wastewater and stormwater collection systems and wastewater treatment plant. The Master Plan also recommends some additional capital projects, such as creation of a sidewalk master plan, construction



of a Senior Center at the National Guard Armory, and installation and upgrading of traffic signals in the downtown area.

All of these projects are important to the quality of life in the City and to maintaining public health and safety. However, the City needs to undertake some equally important measures relating to capital investment planning in order to ensure that these major expenditures are prioritized, and are scheduled to be completed when needed and so as to minimize tax burdens and fiscal stress.

An important first step in this direction is the creation and adoption of a capital improvements program (CIP), which is a plan for short- and long-term capital acquisition and development. The CIP is a link between the City's physical development, its Master Plan, and its fiscal planning and financial capacity.

In addition to improving its capital planning process, the City should protect its investments by ensuring that long-term funding is available for facility maintenance. The Master Plan recommends that adequate budgets to ensure long-term maintenance be provided when new public facilities are constructed.

Finally, it is important to achieve efficient use of all public facilities and systems, and to avoid the need for new facility expenditures where possible. The Master Plan recommends that there be closer coordination between the school department and city government in order to maximize the use of existing facilities, and that system financing options and alternative rate structures be investigated in order to encourage conservation.



LAND USE

Land Use Challenges and Opportunities

Newburyport's land use pattern is essentially established: an urban core surrounded by the traditional neighborhoods of the South End, North End, and the ridgeline area between High Street and Low Street; an expansive but low-density industrial park area between Low Street and the boundary with Newbury; a collection of shopping centers and other retail uses along Storey Avenue near Interstate 95; suburban subdivisions in the West End; and the beach community at the northern end of Plum Island. Within this larger pattern are pockets of commercial and industrial development, particularly along Merrimac Street and around the Route 1 rotary. This pattern is not going to change significantly in the future, although redevelopment of individual properties will effect change in specific locations.

The most important land use challenge facing the City is the future of the downtown riverfront and its relationship to the central business district. The riverfront currently provides abundant long-term parking, but residents would like to see the area enhanced with an expansion of the Waterfront Park. The challenges are in providing alternative locations for the parking spaces and providing for long-term maintenance of expanded public parkland.

Of the land that is as yet undeveloped in the City, a large amount is preserved from development by public or nonprofit ownership or by natural constraints. This includes Maudslay State Park and Moseley Woods in the West End; the Joppa Flats Audubon Sanctuary and SPNEA property in the South End; and the wetlands along the Merrimack River between the mainland and Plum Island.

Some land use challenges facing the City involve the use of the remaining undeveloped privately-owned parcels. For example:

- ◆ There are 24 parcels of agricultural land in Newburyport, totalling 475 acres, or about 11 percent of the City's total area (excluding roads). Ideally, these will remain open and productive for many years to come; however, it is necessary to recognize that farming in the urban fringe can be a fragile occupation, and that parcels may at some point become available for purchase and development under the applicable zoning regulations. If this occurs, the City will be faced with the choice as to whether to exercise its right to acquire the land (at market value) for open space, recreation or other use. If a parcel is determined not to be a priority for acquisition, the City can still influence the way in which the land is developed through the application of standards, ordinances and regulations, and through its site or subdivision plan review authority.
- ◆ A tract of open, industrially-zoned land off Crow Lane near Interstate 95 has been the subject of discussion during the Master Plan process, in large part because of its association with the proposed industrial park access road along the former I-95 right of way. This land can be developed for uses allowed under the Industrial B zoning district with or without improved access, although its ability to attract a high-value use would obviously be enhanced by more direct access to I-95. However, many participants at Master Plan meetings would like to see this land remain open to preserve its environmental and recreational benefits. Whether this tract is a priority for City acquisition is a question that requires evaluation of these benefits against the fiscal and economic impacts.

Aside from a few major tracts such as these, the key land use challenges for the City involve the redevelopment and reuse of existing properties and the preservation of Newburyport's historic character through the use of appropriate design standards and review procedures.

Land Use Goals, Policies and Strategies

INDICATORS

- ❑ Tax base split between residential and nonresidential classifications
 - ❑ Residential, commercial and industrial buildout potential relative to existing development levels (eg, percent growth potential)
-



Goal LU-1

Maintain and enhance the downtown’s role as the City’s civic, cultural, service and commercial center, and as a regional commerce center for surrounding towns.

Strategy LU-1.1:

Remove potential regulatory barriers to mixed use development, including parking and dimensional requirements.

Strategy LU-1.2:

Amend the zoning ordinance to allow shared parking for uses with complementary parking demands (for example, mixed-use developments containing residential and commercial uses).

Strategy LU-1.3:

Consider implementing an expanded or more flexible parking waiver provision in the Zoning Ordinance to enable public amenities to be substituted for off-street parking, when deemed to advance goals of the Master Plan.

Goal LU-2

Maintain a zoning pattern that provides for a mix of residential and nonresidential growth that is appropriate economically and socially for the City.

Policy:

Maintain a mix of land uses such that approximately 20 percent of the property tax base is in nonresidential classifications.

Strategy LU-2.1:

Periodically evaluate the distribution of land use within the City’s zoning districts and assess the extent to which such distribution matches established Master Plan goals.

Strategy LU-2.2:

Prepare a strategic plan for future development in the Industrial Park area, incorporating current information about natural systems and environmental constraints, and integrating conservation, recreation, development, and transportation issues.

Strategy LU-2.3:

Rezoning the I-B Industrial District to allow for office, high tech, research and development, light industrial, and other business uses that are of less impact to residential neighbors and that are consistent with anticipated market directions.

Strategy LU-2.4:

Consider creating an open space district within the zoning ordinance for public parks and reservations, and for unbuildable areas such as conservation easements.

Goal LU-3

Establish standards and procedures for design review to ensure that new development and redevelopment are compatible with the overall pattern of development in the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy:

New commercial development shall be consistent or complementary in scale and design with adjoining residential areas whenever possible.

Policy:

Where new commercial developments adjoin residential areas, buffer areas shall be provided when necessary to protect neighborhood character.



Strategy LU-3.1:

Address the quality of commercial design, particularly in key areas such as Storey Avenue, Route 1 Circle, Merrimac Street and Pond Street.



Strategy LU-3.2:

Examine dimensional controls (setback, height, bulk, etc.) in order to determine standards that preserve the historic and traditional built form and patterns of existing neighborhoods.

Strategy LU-3.3:

Review the current site plan standards and regulations and make any appropriate revisions to enhance the quality of industrial site design.

Goal LU-4

Foster redevelopment of the central waterfront area for open space and limited commercial use, and ensure that its design relates well to the surrounding areas.



Strategy LU-4.1:

Consider zoning incentives for proposed development that increases waterfront open space and public access opportunities.

Strategy LU-4.2:

Study and establish design guidelines to enhance the historic character of the waterfront while harmonizing proposed development with adjoining areas.

Strategy LU-4.3:

Establish a set of design guidelines and public access provisions for the Waterfront Marine Dependent (WMD) and Waterfront Mixed Use (WMU) districts.

Strategy LU-4.4:

Re-examine the assets and shortcomings of the proposed Waterfront Overlay District, and strive to prepare a revised provision that is less complex, more effective, and lends itself to practical application to waterfront properties.

Strategy LU-4.5:

Review array of permissible land uses along waterfront area to ensure that future uses are compatible with Master Plan Goals.



Goal LU-5

Maintain and enhance the character of High Street as the principal corridor defining Newburyport's heritage.

Strategy LU-5.1:

Consider establishing design guidelines for the High Street Corridor relating to both built form and public realm.

Strategy LU 5.2:

Implement a design review process to evaluate proposed development and redevelopment along the corridor.



Goal LU-6

Discourage incremental land use changes, such as commercial sprawl or "spot zoning," that could detract from the City's character.

Strategy LU-6.1:

Discourage the reclassification of land area in the City into the Business One (B-1) zoning district designation. Implement any expansion in existing B-1 districts through the establishment of new Neighborhood Business (B-3) districts.

Strategy LU-6.2:

Enact a zoning amendment to regulate sexually-oriented businesses and restrict them to the I-1 zoning district.

Strategy LU-6.3:

Update zoning district boundaries to correct existing inaccuracies, reduce incompatibilities, and consider recent land use changes.

Strategy LU-6.4:

Review zoning district boundaries to ensure compatible streetscape (for example, Merrimac Street and Route 1, where residential zoning districts face nonresidential districts across the street).



Goal LU-7

Encourage the preservation of farmland to ensure that future generations can enjoy Newburyport's historic agricultural heritage.

Strategy LU-7.1:

Utilize the open space plan and element of the Master Plan to help guide farmland acquisition.

Strategy LU-7.2:

Allow cluster development in the Agriculture-Conservation District in order to advance farmland preservation objectives.

Strategy LU-7.3:

Explore the appropriateness of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) zoning provisions to advance farmland preservation.

HOUSING

Housing Challenges and Opportunities

Newburyport's revitalization since the 1960s has attracted affluent individuals and families into the community. Housing purchase prices and rents have risen rapidly, particularly since the mid-1990s. As a result, housing affordability has become a significant challenge. There are few opportunities for first-time homebuyers, and many city natives have been forced to move to neighboring communities in search of affordable housing. Meeting the state's goal of 10 percent affordable housing units will be difficult, given that the City is currently more than 200 units short of this goal and that total housing growth rates are only about 50 units per year. In order to attain the 10 percent goal, the City needs to create about 24 units of affordable housing each year for 20 years. This will require a significant investment of public funds, as well as a major shift in the pattern of housing development in the City.

One opportunity for providing some publicly-sponsored affordable housing is the site of the former DPW garage on Merrimac Street. Another option is to enact zoning regulations that would require private developers to incorporate affordable housing into their market-rate developments. However, direct public involvement, including provision of land, would provide a greater ability to meet the affordable housing target; therefore, in reviewing potential land acquisitions or dispositions, the City should always consider the suitability of land for housing development.

Aside from housing affordability, the major challenges involve site and building design issues. With respect to new subdivisions, there is a need to ensure that development occurs in a manner that is sensitive both to Newburyport's character and to the preservation of open space networks. These goals can be addressed through site and design review, and through promotion of cluster development as an alternative to conventional subdivision. In the older, built-up areas of the City, the issues relate more to the preservation of historic character, and opportunities include the development of neighborhood-specific design standards, supplemented where appropriate by designation of local historic districts.

Housing Goals, Policies and Strategies

INDICATORS

- Ratio of average housing sales prices to average wages paid by Newburyport businesses, by unit type
 - Ratio of average apartment rents to average wages paid by Newburyport businesses, by unit size
 - Ratio of average sales prices and rents in Newburyport to average rents in the surrounding region
 - Percentage of residents paying more than 30 percent of income for housing costs, by income level
-

Goal H-1

Promote an increase in the supply of affordable housing to support a diverse population.

Policy:

Achieve 10 percent affordable housing by 2010.

Policy:

Use municipal regulatory techniques and permitting authority to promote a wider range of housing costs.

Strategy H-1.1:

Require developers to provide affordable units.

Strategy H-1.2:

Create incentives for developers to provide affordable single-family homes in new subdivisions.

Strategy H-1.3:

Continue to explore the feasibility of developing affordable first-time homebuyer units on the former DPW site on Merrimac Street.

Strategy H-1.4:

Support the Archdiocese of Boston in its goal of creating an appropriately scaled affordable housing development on Federal Street.

Strategy H-1.5:

Review potential barriers to multifamily housing and housing affordability, by examining density and dimensional standards applicable to such uses.

Strategy H-1.6:

Examine zoning incentives and design standards to promote affordable housing within the City's existing districts.

Goal H-2

Ensure that new housing development occurs at rates and in locations that are consistent with the City’s ability to provide public facilities and services.

Strategy H-2.1:

Ensure consideration of “adequacy of infrastructure” in the review of subdivisions and special permit uses.

INDICATORS

- Capital cost impacts of new development
 - Impact of new development on existing and projected excess capacity or demand for public water supply and wastewater treatment
 - Impact of new development on public safety response times
-

Goal H-3

Ensure that the design of new development and redevelopment in the City’s older neighborhoods (North End, South End, High Street) complements the historic character of the neighborhoods.

Strategy H-3.1:

Establish design guidelines for the older neighborhoods relating to both built form and public realm.

Strategy H-3.2:

Establish a design review process to evaluate proposed development and redevelopment within defined neighborhoods.



INDICATOR

- Acres of open space converted per new dwelling unit
-

Goal H-4

Ensure that new housing developments are designed to protect the City’s natural and cultural resources and to preserve open space corridors.

Strategy H-4.1:

Utilize a design and site plan review process for the review of new housing development that is appropriately calibrated to the extent of development proposed.

Strategy H-4.2:

Consider incentives and criteria within the City's Cluster Zoning provision to advance open space and natural and cultural resource preservation objectives.

INDICATORS

- Percentage of renter-occupied units
 - Range of rent levels
 - Housing affordability profile
-

Goal H-5

Promote a wide range of housing options (structure types, tenure types, cost levels) in order to maintain diverse neighborhoods and accommodate households with varying housing needs and family structures.

Policy:

Work with the Housing Authority and non-profit organizations to support their initiatives to develop affordable housing.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Challenges and Opportunities

Newburyport has a stable local economy based on services and retail and wholesale trade. The City has a strong and growing service sector, led by Anna Jaques Hospital (Newburyport's largest employer); a vibrant central business district serving an affluent local population and a thriving tourism sector; and available land in the industrial park to provide for expansion in office, industrial and warehousing activities.

A key challenge facing the City is how to accommodate growth in the tourism sector and downtown without harming the downtown's historic character or lowering the quality of life for residents. Issues such as traffic congestion and parking shortages rank high as concerns of residents, who also want to ensure that the local economy continues to serve local needs.

The City and region's historic and natural resources provide important opportunities for economic growth in low-impact heritage tourism and ecotourism. Entities such as the Essex National Heritage Area, the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, and Audubon's Joppa Flats Sanctuary complement the City's historic downtown and the recreational opportunities provided by the Merrimack River. Continued cooperation and support of these larger regional efforts will benefit the City.

Newburyport has become a regional center for the arts and culture, which in turn supports other local businesses such as restaurants and retail stores. However, there is a concern that rising rental costs might threaten this aspect of the local economy. Other New England cities, including Providence, Worcester and Lowell, have begun to take action to protect and support their arts sectors through favorable tax treatment and other incentives. Newburyport should consider such programs in order to ensure the long-term economic viability of not only the arts community but also the many other businesses that benefit from the regional audience.

Economic Development Goals, Policies and Strategies

INDICATORS

- Number of local businesses in specified categories
 - Volume of local sales in specified categories relative to total buying potential of Newburyport residents
 - Percentage of total property tax base represented by nonresidential uses (commercial, industrial, personal property)
 - Ratio of local jobs in specified industries/occupations to local labor force
-



Goal ED-1

Maintain a balanced local economy serving the shopping, service, tax base and employment needs of the community.

Policy:

Attract, rejuvenate and sustain desirable businesses and industries in the City.

Strategy ED-1.1:

Reinforce the role of the Office of Planning and Development as the economic development office within city government.

Strategy ED-1.2:

Continue participation in the Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Committee, NAID, and the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council.

Strategy ED-1.3:

Consider providing available economic development financing incentives, such as tax increment financing (TIF), where appropriate to support desirable development.

Strategy ED-1.4:

Reinvigorate marine industries such as commercial fishing and boat building and repair.

Strategy ED-1.5:

Promote the restoration of clam harvesting in the Merrimack River estuary.

Goal ED-2

Sustain and promote low-impact heritage tourism and ecotourism.

Strategy ED-2.1:

Promote regional efforts to encourage heritage tourism and ecotourism

Strategy ED-2.2:

Promote the development of lodging and other services, where appropriate and feasible, to support the desired level of heritage tourism and ecotourism.

Goal ED-3

Preserve Newburyport's leadership as a regional economic center.

Strategy ED-3.1:

Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for health and wellness services.

Strategy ED-3.2:

Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for arts, dining, entertainment and culture.

Strategy ED-3.3:

Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for banking, insurance, legal and similar professional services.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL¹ RESOURCES

Natural and Cultural Resources Challenges and Opportunities

For much of its history, Newburyport was a compact, densely-developed city surrounded by much more rural areas. Following many years of decline, residents of the City recognized its heritage and redeveloped by rehabilitating and renovating its many historic structures. As a result, Newburyport is widely recognized for its charm and character. Ironically, however, the City has relatively weak controls in place to protect its heritage. Therefore, a key cultural resources challenge is to put in place an appropriate regulatory structure to help manage change in historic areas and traditional neighborhoods. Many of the land use strategies and actions are designed to address this need.

In the last three decades, residential and commercial growth have moved outward from the traditional urban core, replacing the formerly rural landscape with contemporary suburban subdivisions, shopping centers, and industrial parks. This has had the effect of fragmenting open space and wildlife habitats, and has put increasing pressure on natural systems. With relatively little open land remaining, the preservation of open space corridors must be done on a parcel-by-parcel basis, through careful subdivision and site design.

¹ In the context of the Master Plan, “Cultural Resources” are those aspects of Newburyport’s environment that reflect the activities and contributions of the human inhabitants of the area. They include historic buildings and structures, scenic roads, working landscapes, important institutions and landmarks, streetscapes and similar elements.

Natural and Cultural Resources Goals, Policies and Strategies

INDICATORS

- Percent of critical watershed areas protected from development
 - Acres protected through conservation easements
 - Little River water quality benchmarks and monitoring
 - Merrimack River water quality monitoring
-



Goal NCR-1

Protect and enhance the natural resources and systems of the City.

Policy:

Protect and enhance surface water quality.

Policy:

Ensure that new developments are undertaken in conformance with sound environmental practices.

Strategy NCR-1.1:

Identify necessary actions to reopen Merrimack River clam flats.

Strategy NCR-1.2:

Work with regional organizations such as Eight Towns and the Bay and the Merrimack River Watershed Association to improve water quality.

Strategy NCR-1.3:

Implement measures to reduce nonpoint source pollution of rivers and streams.

Strategy NCR-1.4:

Amend subdivision and site plan review regulations to ensure compliance with Stormwater Phase III requirements.

Strategy NCR-1.5:

Consider creating a position of Conservation Agent to assist the Conservation Commission in review of development proposals and monitoring of improvements.

Goal NCR-2

Preserve and enhance the City's historic structures, traditional neighborhoods, and cultural landscapes.

Strategy NCR-2.1:

Consider establishment of local historic districts using the City's Preservation Plan as a base.

Strategy NCR-2.2:

Review design standards in the subdivision regulations and consider possible amendments for developments in the older area of the city.

Strategy NCR-2.3:

Consider adoption of a demolition delay ordinance.

INDICATORS

- Acres/structures included in local historic districts
 - Acres/structures included in special zoning districts to protect neighborhood character
 - Acres protected through agricultural preservation restrictions, scenic easements, and other techniques to preserve cultural and scenic values
 - Acres maintained in resource-dependent uses through Chapter 61/61A assessment programs
-



OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Open Space and Recreation Challenges and Opportunities

Newburyport is fortunate to have a significant amount of parkland, including regional facilities such as the 480-acre Maudslay State Park and the Plum Island Reservation. Excluding Maudslay, the ratio of parkland to population is just below the optimum level of one acre per 100 residents. Parks are distributed throughout the City. Efforts are underway to create a multiuse trail along abandoned railroad right of way, and to create a walking trail along the Little River.

With continuing housing development and population growth, it is important to maintain existing levels of open space and recreation facilities. The prioritization of land for acquisition or protection is an important step; the challenge is in securing the necessary funding when the time comes for action to acquire land.

The Merrimack River is an outstanding resource that is heavily used by recreational boaters. One challenge is to manage this recreational and transient use so as not to detract from the enjoyment of the River.

The River also represents an opportunity. Many residents of the City do not have large power or sail boats of the type that characterize the waterfront, but would enjoy other opportunities to use the River. There are a number of locations along the riverfront where a community boathouse might be located: the Master Plan recommends that a location be identified and such a facility be developed to enhance accessibility and use of the River.

Open Space and Recreation Goals, Policies and Strategies

INDICATORS

- Acres of public open space per capita
 - Acres of municipal open space per capita
-

Goal OSR-1

Increase the amount of public and private open space that is protected.

Policy:

Maintain a ratio of at least one acre of protected public open space (parks) per 26 residents.²

Strategy OSR-1.1:

Create a permanent open space committee to monitor opportunities for open acquisition.

Strategy OSR-1.2:

Prioritize open space for protection.

Strategy OSR-1.3:

Promote cluster residential development.

Strategy OSR-1.4:

Review subdivision regulations to ensure protection of open space in conjunction with residential development.

INDICATORS

- Connectivity of open space system throughout the City
 - Connectivity of public trails, paths and parks
-

Goal OSR-2

Enhance the existing open space system that protects and links important environmental resources and scenic vistas.

Strategy OSR-2.1:

Continue planning and development of a multi-use recreational trail.

² Note: This is the current ratio in Newburyport (including Maudslay State Park), and is 279 percent higher than the national standard of 1 acre per 100 residents. Excluding Maudslay, Newburyport's ratio is one acre of park per 111 residents.

Strategy OSR-2.2:
Support development of the Border to Boston Trail.

Strategy OSR-2.3:
Enhance the Merrimack River Trail.

Goal OSR-3

Enhance the existing system of recreational facilities and programs to continue to serve the needs of Newburyport's residents.

Policy:

Maintain a ratio of at least one acre of playfields per 800 residents within a one-half mile radius.³

Policy:

Maintain a ratio of at least one acre of playgrounds per 500 children within a one-quarter to one-half mile radius.⁴

Policy:

Enhance public access to Plum Island beach.

Strategy OSR-3.1:

Analyze existing playfield facilities with respect to the the standard of 1 acre per 800 residents and identify any shortfall.

Strategy OSR-3.2:

Review utilization of existing fields and determine needed management changes and/or new fields needed.

Strategy OSR-3.3:

Explore use of City-owned parcels on Plum Island for their potential as waterfront access points.

³ National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard.

⁴ Upper range of NRPA standard.

INDICATORS

- Acres of publicly accessible open space (total and municipal-owned) per capita
- Acres of playground per capita
- Number of specified recreational facilities (playing fields, basketball and tennis courts, swimming pools, etc) per capita



INDICATORS

- Percent of riverfront with public access
 - Number of public boat access points per capita
 - Number of Chapter 91 permits issued and implemented
-



Goal OSR-4

Promote increased public access along the riverfront.

Policy:

Encourage continuous public access along the riverfront.

Policy:

Ensure that the public's access rights to the intertidal zone are not infringed by new development.

Strategy OSR-4.1:

Monitor development subject to Chapter 91 license requirements and negotiate the provision of appropriate public access.

Goal OSR-5

Manage water-related facilities and uses on the Merrimack River to enhance the quality of the experience along the River.

Strategy OSR-5.1:

Study existing boating facilities and uses and determine whether there is a need for limitations on expansion.

Strategy OSR-5.2:

Enhance and expand facilities and services for transient boating, including slips, water, electric hookup, lavatories, showers, laundry, maintenance and security.

Strategy OSR-5.3:

Find new ways for Newburyport citizens to enjoy the river.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Public Facilities and Services Challenges and Opportunities

Newburyport faces a number of issues relating to public facilities: expansion and renovation of public schools (beginning with the High School, now under construction), provision of public water and sewer to Plum Island, expansion of the public water supply, upgrading of the sewer system, and maintenance of public streets and parks are some key examples. In order to effectively plan for and manage these projects and their fiscal impacts, the City needs to enhance its capital planning procedures.

Maintenance of public facilities is an ongoing challenge. The City needs to review its organization and staffing for public facility management and maintenance. Furthermore, the City must protect its investments by ensuring that long-term funding is available for facility maintenance.

Public Facilities and Services

Goals, Policies and Strategies

Goal PFS-1

Maintain all public facilities.

Strategy PFS-1.1:

Implement a capital improvement program.

Strategy PFS-1.2:

Support initiatives to support responsible maintenance of public facilities regardless of economic flux.

Strategy PFS-1.3:

Concurrent with construction of new facilities, provide adequate budget to ensure long-term maintenance of public facilities.

INDICATORS

- Established school indicators – class size, graduation rates, advanced classes, test scores, etc
 - Established library indicators – holdings per capita, circulation rates, etc
-

Goal PFS-2

Provide educational and cultural facilities and services to serve the needs of Newburyport residents.

Policy:

Achieve, to the greatest degree possible, multiple uses of all city facilities regardless of management entity.

Strategy PFS-2.1:

Foster closer coordination between the school department and city government in order to maximize the efficient utilization of existing facilities.

Strategy PFS-2.2:

Establish a senior center at the National Guard Armory as recommended by the May 1999 DCAM feasibility study.

Goal PFS-3

Encourage a diverse range of cultural facilities in the City.

Policy:

Continue to support cultural facilities such as the Firehouse Center for the Arts and the Custom House.

Goal PFS-4

Provide water supply capacity (volumes and pressures) that are adequate for average and peak demand levels and public safety needs.

Policy:

Implement the recommendations of the Water System Master Plan.

Policy:

Update the Water System Master Plan on a consistent timetable with updates of the City's Master Plan.

INDICATOR

- Ratio of water supply system safe yield to average and peak demand levels
-

Goal PFS-5

Conserve water supplies.

Policy:

Ensure that water supply facilities are maintained to conserve water.

Policy:

Promote water conservation by consumers.

Strategy PFS-5.1:

Investigate system financing options and alternative rate structures in order to encourage conservation.

INDICATORS

- Reduction in "unknown" water usage
 - Average water consumed per household
-

INDICATOR

- Reduction in inflow/infiltration
 - Ratio of wastewater system capacity to average and peak daily flows
-

Goal PFS-6

Provide wastewater collection and treatment facilities that are adequate to serve existing and projected development and to protect the environment.

Policy:

Implement the recommendations of the Wastewater System Master Plan.

Policy:

Update the Wastewater System Master Plan on a consistent timetable with updates of the City's Master Plan.

INDICATORS

- Fire department response times
 - Incident rates by location in the City
-

Goal PFS-7

Provide a high quality of public services throughout the City.

Goal PFS-8

Ensure that all public facilities are accessible to disabled persons.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Transportation and Circulation Challenges and Opportunities

Newburyport's local street system provides excellent access throughout the City. The major collectors—Storey Avenue/High Street, Merrimac Street/Water Street/Plum Island Turnpike, Low Street/Pond Street, Parker Street/Graf Road, and State Street—serve both through traffic and local access. In the older neighborhoods the City's street network is a traditional urban grid, providing efficient land utilization and many routes for access and traffic dispersion. In contrast, some West End neighborhoods have been developed with contemporary suburban street networks, with fewer interconnections and more loops and cul-de-sacs.

One important circulation challenge involves access to the Industrial Park area. Although the area is served by two routes that connect to Interstate 95 (Scotland Road, and Storey Avenue/Low Street), a significant amount of truck traffic uses Turkey Hill Road and Hale Street, which adversely affects the neighborhoods around Turkey Hill Road. A long-time plan for a more direct access from Interstate 95, using the former I-95 roadbed, has been challenged during the Master Plan process; and resolving this issue is a top priority of the Master Plan implementation program.

As noted in the *Priorities for Action* section (page 9), parking in the downtown area is a major issue that has been raised by many residents and documented in several recent studies, including the 1998 Downtown Parking Study. Resolving this situation is a key challenge and top priority for the Master Plan. Furthermore, developing new parking facilities and managing existing spaces more efficiently will be necessary in order to achieve the expansion of public open space along the central riverfront, which is also a priority.

On-street parking congestion in the older neighborhoods of the City is also a challenge. With rising affluence and continuing renovation of older homes has come a significant increase in the number of vehicles per household, as well as an increase in the average size of those vehicles parked on the streets.

Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian circulation is another important challenge for the City. The planned multi-use trail along the former railroad rights-of-way will provide an important element, but improved sidewalks and designation and delineation of on-road bicycle routes are also necessary.

Transportation and Circulation

Goals, Policies and Strategies

INDICATORS

- Levels of service at key intersections
 - Connectivity of street system (vs. dead-ends); multiple routings; etc
-

Goal TC-1

Maintain the efficiency of the existing street system for providing access throughout the City.

Policy:

Achieve Level of Service D for downtown intersections, LOS C for major collectors and arterials, and LOS B for local streets in residential neighborhoods.

Strategy TC-1.1:

Identify key intersections and periodically monitor levels of service and safety at these locations.

INDICATORS

- Accident rates
 - High accident locations
-

Goal TC-2

Maintain and improve vehicular traffic safety levels on City streets.

Strategy TC-2.1:

Implement recommendations of the *Downtown Waterfront Area Traffic Study*.

INDICATORS

- Ridership statistics
 - Net cost/revenue per rider
-

Goal TC-3

Promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of local and regional public transportation facilities and services.

Policy:

Continue promotion of public transportation services in the City and region.

Goal TC-4

Ensure that adequate parking spaces are available to support the continued vitality of the central business district.

Policy:

The total parking demand in the central business district shall be met through a combination of private parking facilities, public on-street spaces, and public off-street facilities (parking lots and structures) .

Strategy TC-4.1:

Create one or more parking facilities to replace any spaces removed from the NRA lots and to provide for growth in the downtown.

Strategy TC-4.2:

Reduce off-street parking requirements in the downtown to between 50% and 75% of the requirements for other parts of the City.

Strategy TC-4.3:

Explore the use of existing parking lots (rail station and bus station) for satellite parking in conjunction with frequent and well-coordinated public transit to reduce central business parking demand, especially during peak demand periods such as holidays and festivals.

INDICATORS

- Ratio of public and private parking spaces to total nonresidential floor area within a specified distance
 - Utilization rates for on-street and off-street parking spaces
-



Goal TC-5

Enhance streetscapes and sidewalks throughout the City.

Strategy TC-5.1:

Prepare and implement a sidewalk plan to address safety issues.

INDICATOR

- Percentage of streets with sidewalks in good repair
 - Linear feet of sidewalks repaired or upgraded per year
-

INDICATORS

- ❑ Miles of bicycle lanes and/or multi-use paths by area of the City



Goal TC-6

Provide for safe and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian circulation throughout the City.

Strategy TC-6.1:

Develop off-road multi-use trails where possible.

Strategy TC-6.2:

Ensure that design and site plan review process includes review of proposed pedestrian and bicycle amenities proposed in relation to new development and redevelopment.

Strategy TC-6.3:

Require that all trip-generating development activity that is subject to site plan or special permit review includes adequate analysis and proposal of transportation demand management strategies, such as shared parking, van and carpooling incentives, and initiatives to promote off-peak commuting schedules.

Goal TC-7

Ensure that public streets, sidewalks and pathways are accessible to disabled persons.

Policy:

All public streets, sidewalks and pathways should be barrier-free.

Strategy TC-7.1:

Identify and remove existing barriers to disabled persons.

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Master Plan Implementation Challenges and Opportunities

This Master Plan identifies ninety strategies, many of which have multiple supporting actions. Adoption of the Master Plan, therefore, presents challenges relating to organization and management, staffing, funding, and monitoring.

The commitment to implement the many important actions in the Master Plan carries with it the need for budget and staffing. For example, the nine top priority actions are estimated to require the expenditure of between \$30,000 and \$60,000 in funding for consulting services as well as the investment of between 500 and 600 hours of staff time (primarily in the Office of Planning and Development) in the first year alone. These figures do not include the estimated \$7.1 million cost for a parking structure, or the estimated 1,000 hours of staff time that would be required for this project over a five-year period. The extent of these requirements for implementation means that careful attention must be given to the staffing and budget needs of the Office of Planning and Development, beginning with the current fiscal year. The needs of municipal boards for OPD staff support must be met while additional resources are earmarked for the Office's mandates with regard to economic development, regulatory revisions and updates, and community development.

Other actions in the Implementation Program also have cost and staffing implications. For example, the Plan recommends that consideration be given to establishing the position of Conservation Agent, and to giving tax incentives to help the arts community remain as a vibrant element in Newburyport. The recommendation that a sidewalk improvement plan be created and implemented implies a commitment to increased staff support in the Department of Public Works.

While these new demands present significant challenges, they also offer opportunities to the City by focusing on the need for a reassessment of municipal staffing and organization in the short term, and for ongoing fiscal and capital planning in the long term. Ideally, this Master Plan will serve as the launching pad for a multi-year process to enhance Newburyport's municipal management.

Master Plan Implementation Goals, Policies and Strategies

INDICATOR

- Number of variances issued by the Zoning Board
-



Goal MPI-1

Use the Master Plan as a guide for municipal decision-making.

Policy:

The Master Plan shall be used as a guide in assessing the appropriateness and consistency of all rezoning proposals and other official actions by City officials.

Policy:

No action which would otherwise conflict with the Master Plan shall be taken until the Planning Board has amended the Master Plan.

Goal MPI-2

Update the Master Plan as necessary to keep pace with changes in land use, environmental and economic conditions.

Policy:

The Master Plan shall be updated annually to incorporate newly available data and analyses and to reflect actions completed, and shall be updated at least every five years to review goals, policies and strategies.

Strategy MPI-2.1:

Ensure that all future strategic plans include references to the Master Plan, and that data and analyses developed in strategic planning processes are incorporated into the Master Plan.

Strategy MPI-2.2:

Develop data collection and reporting procedures for City departments that will facilitate monitoring of change and updating of the Master Plan.

Goal MPI-3

Consider regional interrelationships in implementation of the plan, including the impacts of local decisions on neighboring communities.

Strategy MPI-3.1:

Support and actively participate in the efforts of public and private organizations and entities that promote regional planning and interlocal cooperation and coordination.

Goal MPI-4

Use a wide range of funding and financing strategies to implement Master Plan goals.

Strategy MPI-4.1:

Assess the feasibility of adopting the provisions of the Community Preservation Act, under which a property tax surcharge may be enacted for projects relating to affordable housing, open space and historic preservation.

Strategy MPI-4.2:

Pursue planning grants, such as those available under Executive Order 418, in order to pay for planning studies recommended in the Master Plan as well as supplementing existing city planning efforts.

Strategy MPI-4.3:

Identify and implement financial incentives for studios, exhibit and performance spaces, and artists housing, in order to support the role of the arts in Newburyport by encouraging artists to live and work in the City.

Strategy MPI-4.4:

Identify roadway, streetscape, signing, and visitor facility improvements along Route 1A that might be funded through the National Scenic Byways Program upon designation of the road as a National Scenic Byway.



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The Master Plan links its goals to future implementation by identifying a range of strategies and recommended actions. Because it focuses on the City's physical development, implementation of the Master Plan is closely linked to strategies that address land use and development, and in particular to the zoning ordinance. However, it is important to recognize that there are many other ways in which the City can act to further the goals of the Master Plan. The strategies in the Master Plan include recommendations for additional studies and plans of specific areas or topics, and actions that have direct financial implications, such as land acquisition or staffing increases. The following paragraphs outline the kinds of strategies that are contained in the Master Plan and its Action Plan (Volume Two).

Planning

The Master Plan is written at a very broad level, and is not able to address many neighborhood- and site-specific issues. The Plan therefore recommends a number of specific studies to carry the planning process forward. These studies include:

- ◆ A strategic plan for the industrial park area, to address buildout of the remaining parcels with consideration of environmental conditions and the preservation of an open space corridor along the Little River;
- ◆ Analyses of existing site development patterns on a neighborhood basis, in order to establish site and building design standards for infill in older neighborhoods;
- ◆ Evaluation of existing City-owned land that is not protected as open space, to determine whether any such land should be given additional protection and designated for conservation or recreation purposes;
- ◆ Evaluation of the potential for using transfer of development rights as a mechanism for managing growth in the City.

Given the limited amount of staffing that is available for planning, many of the planning studies will require the assistance of short-term assistance. Some projects may be suitable for projects by planning students, while others will require professional consultants. The City should identify the appropriate level of expertise and experience for each type of study, and should seek funding where professional assistance will be needed.

The Master Plan has involved a significant level of time and effort on the part of volunteers, staff and consultants. To protect this investment, as well as to manage development effectively, the City should adhere to a policy of monitoring changing conditions and updating the Plan as necessary and appropriate. It is recommended that the data and analyses in the Plan be updated continuously as new data become available: for example, from the 2001 U.S. Census, annual data updates by the Department of Revenue and Division of Labor Statistics, and completion of strategic plans or development impact reports. Additional recommendations include an annual report on progress on Master Plan goals and strategies, and five-year updates to the Master Plan including broad-based public participation and re-examination of goals, policies and strategies.

Organization and Management

An ongoing commitment is required to monitor the status of recommended strategies and actions and to update the Master Plan. In order to ensure that this continuing attention to planning is maintained,

the Plan recommends a number of strategies relating to organization and management of the planning process. Among the organization and management recommendations are the following:

- ◆ Establishment of a permanent Open Space Committee to monitor the status of private open space and coordinate efforts to acquire appropriate parcels and easements;
- ◆ Shifting responsibility for site plan review for certain categories from the Planning Director to the Planning Board.

Staffing is an important consideration in implementing the Master Plan. The City currently has a limited planning staff which is fully committed to operations and major projects such as the school and library renovations. Several of the Master Plan’s goals and policies require a more extensive role for City government in monitoring and controlling the land development process—site plan review, design review, historic district studies and designation, etc.—and each new responsibility will require an additional commitment of personnel. For example:

- ◆ The Master Plan includes a specific recommendation to hire a Conservation Agent to assist the Conservation Commission in its duties (such a position might be shared with neighboring towns).
- ◆ At least one other position will be required if the City moves forward with recommendations for a design review process and/or establishment of one or more local historic districts.
- ◆ Recommendations for additional public facilities, such as parks and open space, sidewalks and bikepaths, or greenways, will require additional personnel for design, development and maintenance. In this regard the City should consider employing a City Engineer for routine public facilities design and private development reviews, as well as coordination of major public construction projects.

Finally, a commitment to continual updating of the Master Plan also implies a commitment of personnel. Although not specifically recommended in the Master Plan, it is likely that either an additional planning position should be created in the Planning Department, or a separate position should be created to manage major construction projects and thereby free up planning personnel for planning services.

Zoning

The Master Plan itself is neither a zoning ordinance nor a rigid set of blueprints for implementing zoning changes. However, the Master Plan should be used to guide the process of exploring and preparing potential zoning changes, including changes to the text of the zoning ordinance and, in particular instances, actual changes to zoning district boundaries. When land use goals are meshed with actual regulatory and zoning strategies, the City’s land use policies can begin to help preserve and shape the “place based” characteristics that help define the very character of Newburyport. At a minimum, the Master Plan should be used as a guide to evaluate the merit of particular rezoning proposals that are brought forward by private parties.

Zoning rules can help to dramatically influence the City’s future physical evolution, as well as preservation of its existing built and natural form. Zoning can address the following aspects of land use and development:

- ◆ Array of land uses
- ◆ Buffering or separation between land uses
- ◆ Allowance of mixed uses
- ◆ Scale of development (bulk, height, density, etc.)

- ◆ Quality of the development review process
- ◆ Requirements for aesthetic and functional amenities
- ◆ Preservation of open space
- ◆ Housing diversity and affordability
- ◆ Economic and employment characteristics
- ◆ Contributions to public realm and enhancements
- ◆ Signage

Before the City embarks on a zoning ordinance program, it needs to address, at least conceptually, the scope and nature of the initiatives it wishes to pursue. Additionally, it should also identify those changes that merely constitute “fine-tuning,” and those that require more substantial examination, and extensive public input and participation.

Non-Zoning Regulations

In addition to the zoning ordinance, there are a number of other existing and potential regulations which can assist the City in managing its development. These include:

- ◆ Subdivision rules and regulations (authorized under Mass. G.L. Ch. 41)
- ◆ Local wetlands regulations (Mass. G.L. Ch. 131)
- ◆ Local historic districts (Mass. G. L. Ch. 40C)
- ◆ Scenic road regulations (Mass. G.L. Ch. 40, §15C)
- ◆ Non-zoning sign ordinance (Mass. G.L. Ch. 93, §§29-33)
- ◆ Board of Health regulations (Mass. G.L. Ch. 111, §31)
- ◆ Earth removal ordinance (Mass. G.L. Ch. 40 §21(17))
- ◆ General ordinances (Mass. G.L. Ch. 40, §21)

Although the Master Plan contains recommendations regarding only two of these types of tools—subdivision regulations and local historic districts—the availability of this broad range of options should be kept in mind as the City refines its land use growth management strategies.

Acquisition

Acquisition of land through purchase, donation or easements is an important function of city government in providing facilities and services for residents. The Master Plan recommends open space acquisition and protection in order to meet the recreational needs of a growing population.

Investment

Finally, the City must make capital investments in order to maintain its existing facilities and provide new ones. As an example, the Master Plan recommends continuation of the sidewalk upgrade program and enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian links throughout the City.

Priority Strategies

To assist in determining priorities for implementation of Master Plan strategies, members of the City Council, Planning Board, and Master Plan Task Forces were polled and asked to indicate the ten most important strategies on which to move forward. Although a minority of each group responded to the request, the responses provide an indication of sentiment among those who have been most closely involved in the planning process. The Steering Committee reviewed the responses and concurred that the strategies identified as priorities should be addressed first during the implementation phase.

Of the 90 strategies included in the draft Master Plan, nine were identified as priorities by at least one quarter of the respondents to the survey. They are listed below in decreasing order of “votes,” and the prioritization can be further refined into three groups: one strategy identified by more than half the respondents, two that were cited by more than one-third but fewer than one-half; and six that were identified by more than one-fourth but fewer than one-third.

Highest Priority – Downtown Parking

It comes as no surprise that the top priority strategy for the Master Plan concerns parking in the central business district. This was the only strategy to be identified by a majority of respondents as a priority for early implementation.

TC-4.1 Create one or more parking facilities in order to replace any spaces removed from the NRA lots and to provide for growth in the downtown.

Very High Priorities – Capital Improvement Planning and Waterfront Zoning

The second tier of priority strategies consists of two strategies that were supported by more than one-third of the respondents to the survey. These strategies focus on improving capital planning in the City, and on creating regulatory incentives for developers to provide open space and public access along the waterfront.

PFS-1.1 Implement a capital improvement program.

LU-4.1 Consider zoning incentives for proposed development that increases waterfront open space and public access opportunities.

High Priorities – The Industrial Park, Affordable Housing, Historic Preservation, and Design Standards

The third tier of priorities consists of six strategies that were supported by more than a quarter, but fewer than a third, of the respondents. These include strategies addressing strategic planning for the Industrial Park area, promotion of affordable housing, protection of open space, and preservation of Newburyport’s historic neighborhoods through establishment of historic districts and revisions to local zoning controls.

LU-2.2 Prepare a strategic plan for future development in the Industrial Park area, incorporating current information about natural systems and environmental constraints, and integrating conservation, recreation, development, and transportation issues.

H-1.6 Examine zoning incentives and design standards to promote affordable housing within the City’s existing districts.

NCR-2.1 Consider establishment of local historic districts using the City’s Preservation Plan as a base.

OSR-1.2 Prioritize open space for protection.

H-1.1 Require developers to provide affordable units.

LU-3.2 Examine dimensional controls (setback, height, bulk, etc.) in order to determine standards that preserve the historic and traditional built form and patterns of existing neighborhoods.

Action should begin on these nine high priority strategies before the end of 2001, and substantial progress can be made on most of them before the end of 2002. However, two of these strategies will take several years to accomplish: creation of new downtown parking facilities, and establishment of local historic districts.

It is important to note the identification of certain strategies as priorities does not mean that action on other strategies should necessarily be deferred. A number of zoning actions and other strategies can be moved forward as staff time and budgets permit.

Addressing Industrial Park Growth and Access Issues

As noted in the chapter on *Planning Priorities*, an important issue that arose during the planning process involves the proposal to create a more direct access from Interstate 95 into the Industrial Park area. Early drafts of the Master Plan supported the continuation of this strategy, but it was agreed following the March 2001 community meeting that more research and discussion within the community was needed to determine the best approach for addressing the existing and future access needs of this area. The Steering Committee determined that resolving this issue should be a top priority of the Master Plan's implementation.

Action on this issue should take place within the context of a detailed strategic plan for the Industrial Park area (Strategy LU-2.2). Before determining the optimal access strategy, it is necessary to understand clearly the existing conditions relating to land use, the environment, and access and circulation, and to make projections of future conditions based on likely or preferred development scenarios. An analysis at such detail was beyond the scope of this Master Plan, and therefore a more focused study is needed. This will require the assistance of a consulting team with experience in site planning, natural resources analysis, outdoor recreation planning, land use regulation, and alternative methods for financing improvements.

The scope of work for the consulting team should include:

- ◆ Map existing development and natural features (soils, waterways, wetlands, floodplains, drainage patterns, wildlife habitat areas).
- ◆ Meet with key property owners to discuss long-range development opportunities and constraints.
- ◆ Meet with representatives of public agencies and private organizations to discuss environmental issues and recreation opportunities.
- ◆ Analyze all sites for development or expansion potential given existing regulations and environmental considerations.
- ◆ Map existing and potential open space networks and public access points.
- ◆ Identify and map desirable buffers between uses.
- ◆ Assemble data on existing traffic generation and traffic patterns related to the Industrial Park, and estimate future traffic conditions based on growth scenarios.

- ◆ Analyze access issues, and identify a range of alternatives to address (a) current access needs, (b) future needs with the level of growth that might occur without construction of a new access road, and (c) future needs under current zoning (“buildout” according to existing regulations).

Upon the completion of this analytical phase of the plan, the City should conduct a public process to present the factual information and provide opportunities for discussion by residents and property owners. Because of the controversy surrounding the access road issue, it is highly recommended that an outside facilitator be engaged to manage the public process. The facilitator might be drawn from an existing regional organization involved in planning issues (such as the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission), or it could be a private firm or individual.

At a minimum the public process should include:

- ◆ A public forum/workshop to present the results of the analysis and to provide an opportunity for residents and property owners to discuss the impacts of the identified access alternatives on the City’s neighborhoods, economy, environment, and public safety.
- ◆ An evaluation of the outcomes of the forum/workshop and preparation of draft policies on development, environmental protection, and access/circulation.
- ◆ A second public forum to present the draft policies and solicit comments from residents and property owners.

The strategic plan consultant should participate in the public forums and in the development of draft policies. Following the second public forum, the consultant should prepare a detailed action plan with recommendations for appropriate zoning changes, land acquisitions for recreational open space and environmental protection, and methods for financing the costs of needed public improvements.

If the City moves immediately to appropriate funding and select a consultant, the analytical phase can begin in January 2002 and the entire project can be completed by August. The Mayor and Planning Director should then present final strategic plan to the Planning Board and City Council. The Planning Board should adopt the plan as a formal amendment to the Master Plan, and the City Council should formally endorse the plan, including the access policies and actions that it recommends.

ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The Action Plan presents specific actions that are recommended to implement the Master Plan strategies. Key responsible individuals or entities are identified for most actions, along with recommended timetables for completion and estimates of costs and municipal staff requirements. This Action Plan may therefore be used to measure progress on the Master Plan; and it should be updated as frequently as necessary to maintain its usefulness.

Actions Listed by Priority

This section lists the Master Plan strategies grouped according to their general priority level, along with actions that are recommended to implement the strategies. The actions are identified by priority levels from 1 to 5, with Priority 1 representing the highest priority and Priority 5 the lowest. The priority rankings were assigned by the Master Plan Steering Committee based on the responses to the questionnaire as well as the ongoing input from residents over the course of the planning process.

It is important to note that a low priority ranking does not suggest that a particular strategy is unimportant; on the contrary, all of the strategies listed in the Master Plan are considered to be important. However, it is necessary to assign priorities in order to develop reasonable expectations as to when action might be taken on these strategies, given the limitations of funding and staff time.

Starting on page 77, these strategies and actions are listed again, this time sorted according to the functional elements as presented on pages 17 through 49 (Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, etc.). Thus, the Master Plan user may review the priority actions in this section, and then look up the applicable strategy by its reference number in the subsequent section in order to find its recommended timetable for implementation, estimated cost, estimated staff hours, and other information such as potential funding sources.

The following sections identify the agencies with primary responsibility for carrying out each action. The entities designated most frequently are identified by abbreviations, as follows:

CC	City Council
DPW	Department of Public Works
HC	Historic Commission
HDSC	Historic District Study Commission
MVPC	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
OPD	Office of Planning and Development
OSC	Open Space Committee
PB	Planning Board

A number of strategies do not have specific action recommendations. In some cases, this is because the strategy statement is fairly specific, and therefore no additional explanation is necessary. In other cases, further work needs to be done to identify appropriate actions. These latter cases tend to be the strategies with lower priority rankings; consequently, the actions can be identified in future years as progress is made on the priority strategies and updates to the Master Plan are made.

Priority 1 Strategies and Actions

LU-2.2 Prepare a strategic plan for future development in the Industrial Park area, incorporating current information about natural systems and environmental constraints, and integrating conservation, recreation, development, and transportation issues.

Actions:

- ◆ Identify funding source for project; appropriate funds and/or secure grant funding for consultant services (OPD, Mayor, CC)
- ◆ Prepare consultant Scope of Services (see discussion beginning on page 55) (OPD)
- ◆ Select consultant and manage project (OPD)
- ◆ Prepare strategic plan (Consultant)
- ◆ Select an outside facilitator to manage the public process (Mayor)
- ◆ Hold a public forum/workshop to present alternatives and consider impacts (Facilitator, Mayor, OPD, MVPC/consultant)
- ◆ Evaluate forum/workshop outcomes and prepare draft policies on development, open space, and access (Mayor, OPD)
- ◆ Hold second public forum to present draft policy and solicit input (Facilitator, Mayor, OPD)
- ◆ Present strategic plan to Planning Board (Mayor, OPD)
- ◆ Adopt strategic plan as amendment to Master Plan (PB)
- ◆ Endorse strategic plan, including access policies (CC)
- ◆ Negotiate with property owners for acquisitions or easements to create open space networks and public access (Mayor, OPD, Open Space Committee)

LU-3.2 Examine dimensional controls (setback, height, bulk, etc.) in order to determine standards that preserve the historic and traditional built form and patterns of existing neighborhoods.

Actions:

- ◆ Analyze development patterns on a neighborhood basis and define appropriate standards for each area (OPD)
- ◆ Review existing dimensional standards and recommend changes to ensure that building setbacks in historic neighborhoods are based upon the prevailing or traditional alignments of adjoining structures, and are related appropriately to building heights (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate and recommend changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-4.1 Consider zoning incentives for proposed development that increases waterfront open space and public access opportunities.

Actions:

- ◆ Prepare recommended changes (OPD)
- ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-7.1 Utilize the open space plan and element of the Master Plan to help guide farmland acquisition.

Actions:

- ◆ Identify key farmland parcels for acquisition (OSC)
- ◆ Communicate with property owners regarding their plans for the parcels and City's interest (OSC)
- ◆ Recommend acquisition or other preservation measures as appropriate (OSC)
- ◆ Act on recommendations (ConCom, CC)

H-1.1 Require developers to provide affordable units.

Actions:

- ◆ Draft an inclusionary housing amendment to the zoning ordinance, to require additional affordable units with the issuance of special permits (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC)

H-1.6 Examine zoning incentives and design standards to promote affordable housing within the City's existing districts.

Actions:

- ◆ Review existing zoning incentives and design standards and recommend amendments as appropriate to promote affordable housing (OPD)
- ◆ Review recommended amendments and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Enact ordinance amendments (CC)

NCR-2.1 Consider establishment of local historic districts using the City's Preservation Plan as a base.

Actions:

- ◆ Vote to create Historic District Study Committee (CC)
- ◆ Appoint HDSC members (Mayor, CC)
- ◆ Review existing historic properties survey; update as necessary; select historic district(s) and district boundaries; prepare required reports (HDSC)

- ◆ Hold public hearing(s) as required (HDSC)
- ◆ Adopt historic district(s) (CC)
- ◆ Appoint Historic District Commission (Mayor, CC)

OSR-1.2 Prioritize open space for protection.

Actions:

- ◆ Review Open Space and Recreation Plan for guidance on priority open space needs (OSC)
- ◆ Evaluate unprotected land currently under the jurisdiction of city agencies to determine whether additional protection for open space and recreation is appropriate (OSC)
- ◆ Evaluate undeveloped privately-owned parcels for their ability to address priority open space needs, and identify protection techniques appropriate to each parcel (OSC)
- ◆ Monitor the status of Chapter 61/61A/61B parcels and recommend City actions as appropriate (OSC)

PFS-1.1 Implement a capital improvement program.

Actions:

- ◆ Designate Office of Planning and Development to coordinate the CIP (CC)
- ◆ Prepare an inventory of existing capital facilities (All department heads, boards and commissions)
- ◆ Establish level of service standards (Department heads)
- ◆ Forecast demand for services (OPD)
- ◆ Solicit, compile and evaluate project requests (OPD)
- ◆ Establish project priorities (Departments, OPD)
- ◆ Assess the City's fiscal capacity (Mayor, Treasurer, Assessor)
- ◆ Develop a CIP financing plan (Mayor, OPD, Treasurer)
- ◆ Prepare capital improvement program (OPD)
- ◆ Update capital improvement program annually

PFS-2.2 Establish a senior center at the National Guard Armory as recommended by the May 1999 DCAM feasibility study.

Action:

- ◆ Work with Senior Center Building Committee to work with designer and begin plans for construction

TC-4.1 Create one or more parking facilities in order to replace any spaces removed from the NRA lots and to provide for growth in the downtown.

Actions:

- ◆ Develop parking management plan for the downtown area, to guide financing and management of all public parking spaces and facilities (OPD, Mayor, Police Dept.)
- ◆ Develop plan for creating new facilities if necessary, including timetable and financing program (OPD, Mayor)
- ◆ Acquire land for new facilities (OPD, Mayor, CC)
- ◆ Secure funding for facility design and construction (OPD, Mayor, CC)
- ◆ Finalize facility design (OPD)
- ◆ Construct parking facilities (OPD)

TC-7.1 Identify and remove existing barriers to the disabled.

Actions:

- ◆ Inventory barriers in public facilities (DPW)
- ◆ Schedule improvements and incorporate in Capital Improvement Program (DPW, OPD)

Priority 2 Strategies and Actions

LU-2.3 Rezone the I-B Industrial District to allow for office, high tech, research and development, light industrial, and other business uses that are of less impact to residential neighbors and that are consistent with anticipated market directions.

Actions:

- ◆ Prepare recommended changes (OPD)
- ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-4.4 Reexamine the assets and shortcomings of the proposed Waterfront Overlay District, and strive to prepare a revised provision that is less complex, more effective, and lends itself to practical application to waterfront properties.

Actions:

- ◆ Review proposed district regulations (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate proposed regulations and recommend adoption (PB)
- ◆ Adopt new district and regulations (CC)

LU-5.1 Consider establishing design guidelines for the High Street Corridor relating to both built form and public realm.

Actions:

- ◆ Carry out a survey of the corridor to identify positive design elements and threats to its character (OPD, HC)
- ◆ Evaluate existing zoning and other standards for their impact on important design elements (OPD, HC)
- ◆ Prepare design guidelines (consultant)
- ◆ Adopt guidelines as amendment to Master Plan (PB)

LU-6.2 Enact a zoning amendment to regulate sexually-oriented businesses and restrict them to the I-1 zoning district.

Actions:

- ◆ Prepare ordinance (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC)

LU-7.2 Allow cluster development in the Agriculture-Conservation District in order to advance farmland preservation objectives.

Actions:

- ◆ Review existing cluster zoning provision for potential application to existing farmland in the City and draft appropriate amendments (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Enact ordinance changes (CC)

LU-7.3 Investigate and explore the appropriateness of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) zoning provisions to advance farmland preservation.

Actions:

- ◆ Identify existing farmland parcels and likely development scenarios, including owners' motivations and market values (OPD)
- ◆ Analyze the economic feasibility of using TDR to preserve the parcels (OPD)
- ◆ Identify possible receiving areas for transferred density (OPD)
- ◆ If TDR appears feasible, prepare ordinance to create program and to designate sending and receiving areas (OPD)
- ◆ Review ordinance and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Adopt TDR ordinance (CC)

H-4.2 Consider incentives and criteria within the City's Cluster Zoning provision to advance open space and natural and cultural resource preservation objectives.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy] (PB)

ED-1.1 Reinforce the role of the Office of Planning and Development as the economic development office within city government.

Actions:

- ◆ Review OPD workload and staffing needs; identify any organizational changes to enhance economic development planning (Mayor)
- ◆ Consider creation of new economic development staff position within OPD (Mayor)

ED-2-2 Promote the development of lodging and other services, where appropriate and feasible, to support the desired level of heritage tourism and ecotourism.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

NCR-1.2 Work with regional organizations such as Eight Towns and the Bay and the Merrimack River Watershed Association to improve water quality.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

NCR-1.4 Amend subdivision and site plan review regulations to ensure compliance with Stormwater Phase III requirements.

Actions:

- ◆ Prepare necessary amendments (OPD)
- ◆ Adopt amended regulations (PB)

NCR-1.5 Consider creating a position of Conservation Agent to assist the Conservation Commission in review of development proposals and monitoring of improvements.

Actions:

- ◆ Review ConCom workload and staff needs (Mayor, ConCom)
- ◆ Create position if advisable (Mayor, CC)

NCR-2.3 Consider adoption of a demolition delay ordinance.

Actions:

- ◆ Review alternatives and present to Historic Commission (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend action (HC)
- ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC)

OSR-1.1 Create a permanent open space committee to monitor opportunities for open space acquisition.

Action:

- ◆ Appoint Open Space Committee (Mayor)

OSR-1.3 Promote cluster residential development.

Actions:

- ◆ Review existing cluster zoning provision and recommend changes to make cluster development a preferred option for developers (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Enact ordinance changes (CC)

PFS-2.1 Foster closer coordination between the school department and city government in order to maximize the efficient utilization of existing facilities.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

TC-2.2 Minimize potential adverse effects of physical traffic control measures.

Action:

- ◆ Reduce speed limits consistent with currently advocated limits for pedestrian safety in “congested village areas” to reduce need for physical changes

TC-5.1 Prepare and implement a sidewalk plan to address safety issues.

Actions:

- ◆ Inventory and map safety issues (DPW)
- ◆ Schedule improvements and incorporate into Capital Improvement Program (DPW, OPD)

MPI-4.1 Assess the feasibility of adopting the provisions of the Community Preservation Act, under which a property tax surcharge may be enacted for projects relating to affordable housing, open space and historic preservation.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy] (OPD, Mayor)

Priority 3 Strategies and Actions

H-1.2 Create incentives for developers to provide affordable single-family homes in new subdivisions.

Actions:

- ◆ Revise the existing density bonus in cluster subdivisions to enhance its potential to promote affordable housing (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Enact ordinance change (CC)

H-1.3 Continue to explore the feasibility of developing affordable first-time homebuyer units on the former DPW site on Merrimac Street.

Actions:

- ◆ Complete schematic design/density analysis
- ◆ Prepare Request for Proposals for development

H-1.4 Support the Archdiocese of Boston in its goal of creating an appropriately scaled affordable housing development on Federal Street.

Action:

- ◆ Establish a task force including neighborhood residents and affordable housing advocates to work with the Archdiocese and its designated developer (Mayor)

H-2.1 Ensure consideration of "adequacy of infrastructure" in the review of subdivisions and special permit uses.

Actions:

- ◆ Adapt or create a consistent community impact assessment model for subdivisions, and consider extending this to special permits (OPD)
- ◆ Adopt community impact assessment model as amendment to subdivision regulations (PB)
- ◆ Adopt special permit regulation requiring use of community impact assessment model (PB, CC)
- ◆ Propose standards and procedures for regulating new development at the City boundaries where access and services are proposed to be provided through an adjoining community (OPD)
- ◆ Adopt recommended standards and procedures (PB, CC)

H-3.1 Establish design guidelines for the older neighborhoods relating to both built form and public realm.

Action:

- ◆ Analyze development patterns on a neighborhood basis and define appropriate design guidelines for each area (OPD)

H-3.2 Establish a design review process to evaluate proposed development and redevelopment within defined neighborhoods.

Actions:

- ◆ Provide examples and recommend approach (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate options and recommend (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

H-4.1 Utilize a design and site plan review process for the review of new housing development that is appropriately calibrated to the extent of development proposed.

Actions:

- ◆ Provide examples and recommend approach (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate options and recommend (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

ED-1.3 Consider providing available economic development financing incentives, such as tax increment financing (TIF), where appropriate to support desirable development.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

ED-1.5 Promote the restoration of clam harvesting in the Merrimack River estuary.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

ED-3.2 Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for arts, dining, entertainment and culture.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

NCR-2.2 Review design standards in the subdivision regulations and consider possible amendments for developments in the older area of the city.

Actions:

- ◆ Review design standards and their impacts on recent subdivisions (OPD, PB)
- ◆ Prepare revisions as appropriate and submit to Planning Board (OPD)

- ◆ Adopt revisions to subdivision regulations (PB)

OSR-1.4 Review subdivision regulations to ensure protection of open space in conjunction with residential development.

Actions:

- ◆ Review existing regulations and recommend appropriate changes (OPD)
- ◆ Review and adopt recommended changes (PB)

OSR-2.1 Continue planning and development of a multi-use recreational trail.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

OSR-3.1 Analyze existing playfield facilities with respect to the standard of 1 acre per 800 residents and identify any shortfall.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy] (OPD)

OSR-3.2 Review utilization of existing fields and determine needed management changes and/or new fields needed.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy] (OPD)

OSR-3.3 Explore use of City-owned parcels on Plum Island for their potential as waterfront access points.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy] (OPD)

OSR-4.1 Monitor development subject to Chapter 91 license requirements and negotiate the provision of appropriate public access.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy] (OPD)

OSR-5.2 Enhance and expand facilities and services for transient boating, including slips, water, electric hookup, lavatories, showers, laundry, maintenance and security.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

OSR-5.3 Find new ways for Newburyport citizens to enjoy the river.

Action:

- ◆ Develop a plan for creation of a community boathouse and establishment of public sailing and boating programs

PFS-1.2 Support initiatives to support responsible maintenance of public facilities regardless of economic flux.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

PFS-1.3 Concurrent with construction of new facilities, provide adequate budget to ensure long-term maintenance of public facilities.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

PFS-5.1 Investigate system financing options and alternative rate structures in order to encourage conservation

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

MPI-2.1 Ensure that all future strategic plans include references to the Master Plan, and that data and analyses developed in strategic planning processes are incorporated into the Master Plan.

Actions:

- ◆ Include reference to the Master Plan in all strategic and functional plans, including Water System Master Plan, Wastewater Management Plan, downtown studies, traffic plans, Open Space and Recreation Plan, etc. (all City departments, commissions, boards, and officials)
- ◆ Annually review planning documents to ensure that Master Plan is referenced, and to extract relevant data and analyses for update to Master Plan (OPD)

MPI-2.2 Develop data collection and reporting procedures for City departments that will facilitate monitoring of change and updating of the Master Plan.

Actions:

- ◆ Order that Planning Director shall have primary responsibility for implementing the Master Plan and shall issue an annual “State of the Master Plan” report to joint session of City Council and Planning Board (CC)
- ◆ Present an annual “State of the Master Plan” report to review the status of strategies and actions and report on significant changes in trends or indicators (Planning Director)

- ◆ Hold an annual public forum in conjunction with the “State of the Master Plan” report to provide an opportunity for residents to continue the public participation process (Mayor, OPD)
- ◆ Hold periodic community planning forums in order to inform discussion and decision-making on important planning issues (OPD)

Priority 4 Strategies and Actions

LU-1.1 Remove potential regulatory barriers to mixed use development, including parking and dimensional requirements.

Actions:

- ◆ Review zoning and recommend changes (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate and recommend changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-1.2 Amend the zoning ordinance to allow shared parking for uses with complementary parking demands (for example, mixed-use developments containing residential and commercial uses).

Actions:

- ◆ Review zoning and recommend changes (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate and recommend changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-1.3 Consider implementing an expanded or more flexible parking waiver provision in the Zoning Ordinance to enable public amenities to be substituted for off-street parking, when deemed to advance goals of the Master Plan.

Actions:

- ◆ Provide examples and recommend changes (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate options and recommend (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-2.1 Periodically evaluate the distribution of land use within the City’s zoning districts and assess the extent to which such distribution matches established Master Plan goals.

Action:

- ◆ Review land use and zoning changes annually (OPD)

LU-2.4 Consider creating an open space district within the zoning ordinance for public parks and reservations, and for unbuildable areas such as conservation easements.

Actions:

- ◆ Provide examples to PB and Open Space Committee (OPD)
- ◆ Review protection needs and recommend areas for rezoning (Open Space Committee)
- ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-3.1 Address the quality of commercial design, particularly in key areas such as Storey Avenue, Route 1 Circle, Merrimac Street and Pond Street.

Actions:

- ◆ Draft zoning ordinance amendment to vest site plan review authority in the Planning Board for certain types of development, based on scale, location, or type of use (OPD)
- ◆ Prepare design guidelines for specific commercial districts (OPD)
- ◆ Recommend revisions to the site plan review ordinance with reference to design guidelines, and recommend a design review process for all new commercial development and major modifications (OPD)
- ◆ Review existing dimensional and design requirements for commercial and non-residential signs, and recommend sign ordinance amendments as appropriate (OPD)
- ◆ Draft requirements for natural or landscaped buffers for new highway commercial development adjoining existing residential neighborhoods (OPD)
- ◆ Evaluate and recommend ordinance changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt ordinance amendments (CC)

LU-4.2 Study and establish design guidelines to enhance the historic character of the waterfront while harmonizing proposed development with adjoining areas.

Actions:

- ◆ Review previous waterfront planning documents and determine level of effort needed to complete work (OPD)
- ◆ Select consultant to prepare design guidelines (OPD)
- ◆ Adopt guidelines as amendment to Master Plan (PB)

LU-4.3 Establish a set of design guidelines and public access provisions for the Waterfront Marine Dependent district (WMD) and the Waterfront Mixed Use district (WMU).

Actions:

- ◆ Review previous waterfront planning documents and determine level of effort needed to complete work (OPD)

- ◆ Select consultant to prepare design guidelines (OPD)
- ◆ Adopt guidelines as amendment to Master Plan (PB)

LU-4.5 Review array of permissible land uses along waterfront area to ensure future uses are compatible with Master Plan Goals.

Actions:

- ◆ Review zoning and recommend changes as appropriate (OPD)
- ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-5.2 Implement a design review process to evaluate proposed development and redevelopment along the corridor.

Actions:

- ◆ Prepare zoning ordinance for new High Street design review overlay district (OPD)
- ◆ Review ordinance and recommend adoption (PB)
- ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC)

LU-6.3 Update zoning district boundaries to correct existing inaccuracies, reduce incompatibilities, and consider recent land use changes.

Actions:

- ◆ Use GIS to identify potential problem areas based on zoning/land use discrepancies, recent development, variance requests, etc. (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Adopt map amendments (CC)

H-1.5 Review potential barriers to multifamily housing and housing affordability, by examining density and dimensional standards applicable to such uses.

Actions:

- ◆ Review zoning ordinance and identify barriers or disincentives to the development of multifamily housing or affordable housing; recommend amendments as appropriate (OPD)
- ◆ Review recommended changes and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Enact ordinance amendments (CC)

ED-1.2 Continue participation in the Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Committee, NAID, and the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

ED-1.4 Reinvigorate marine industries such as commercial fishing and boat building and repair.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

ED-2.1 Promote regional efforts to encourage heritage tourism and ecotourism.

Actions:

- ◆ Continue participation and coordination with the Essex National Heritage Area (Mayor, OPD, Chamber of Commerce)
- ◆ Support ENHA effort to designate and promote a National Scenic Byway along Routes 1A and 133 from Newburyport to Gloucester (Mayor, OPD, Chamber of Commerce)
- ◆ Evaluate the possibility for designation of a Merrimack River Scenic Byway from Newburyport to Haverhill and Lawrence (OPD, Chamber of Commerce)

ED-3.1 Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for health and wellness services.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

ED-3.3 Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for banking, insurance, legal and similar professional services.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

NCR-1.1 Identify necessary actions to reopen Merrimack River clam flats.

Action:

- ◆ Continue working with regional planning agencies

NCR-1.3 Implement measures to reduce nonpoint source pollution of rivers and streams.

Action:

- ◆ Continue working with regional planning agencies to become educated and take appropriate actions

OSR-2.3 Enhance the Merrimack River Trail.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

OSR-5.1 Study existing boating facilities and uses and determine whether there is a need for limitations on expansion.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

TC-2.1 Implement recommendations of the Downtown Waterfront Area Traffic Study.

Actions:

- ◆ Install traffic signals on Merrimac Street at both the southbound and the northbound ramps of Route 1
- ◆ Upgrade the existing signal at the intersection of Merrimac Street and Green Street

TC-4.2 Reduce off-street parking requirements in the downtown to between 50% and 75% of the requirements for other parts of the City.

Actions:

- ◆ Prepare amendment to zoning ordinance (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for approval (PD)
- ◆ Adopt zoning amendment (CC)

TC-4.3 Explore the use of existing parking lots (rail station and bus station) for satellite parking in conjunction with frequent and well-coordinated public transit to reduce central business district parking demand, especially during peak demand periods.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

TC-6.1 Develop off-road multi-use trails where possible.

Action:

- ◆ [none identified]

TC-6.2 Ensure that design and site plan review process includes review of proposed pedestrian and bicycle amenities proposed in relation to new development and redevelopment.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy] (OPD)

MPI-3.1 Support and actively participate in the efforts of public and private organizations and entities that promote regional planning, interlocal cooperation, and coordination.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

MPI-4.2 Pursue planning grants, such as those available under Executive Order 418, in order to pay for planning studies recommended in the Master Plan as well as supplementing existing city planning efforts.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

MPI-4.3 Identify and implement financial incentives for studios, exhibit and performance spaces, and artists housing, in order to support the role of the arts in Newburyport by encouraging artists to live and work in the City.

Action:

- ◆ Consider establishing an Arts District within which tax and other incentives would be available to artists and craftspersons (such districts have been established in Lowell, Worcester and Providence)

MPI-4.4 Identify roadway, streetscape, signing, and visitor facility improvements along Route 1A that might be funded through the National Scenic Byways Program upon designation of the road as a National Scenic Byway.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

Priority 5 Strategies and Actions

LU-3.3 Review the current site plan standards and regulations and make any appropriate revisions to enhance the quality of industrial site design.

Actions:

- ◆ Prepare recommended changes (OPD)
- ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB)
- ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC)

LU-6.1 Discourage the reclassification of land area in the City into the Business One (B-1) zoning district designation. Implement any expansion in existing B-1 districts through the establishment of new Neighborhood Business (B-3) districts.

Action:

- ◆ Monitor proposals to expand B-1 zoning district (OPD)

LU-6.4 Review zoning district boundaries to ensure compatible streetscape (for example, Merrimac Street and Route 1, where residential zoning districts face nonresidential districts across the street).

Actions:

- ◆ Review locations where zoning district boundaries run along a street; determine whether adjustments are advisable; prepare recommended map changes (OPD)
- ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB)
- ◆ Adopt map amendments (CC)

OSR-2.2 Support development of the Border to Boston Trail.

Action:

- ◆ Continue working with regional organizations

TC-1.1 Identify key intersections and periodically monitor levels of service and safety at these locations.

Action:

- ◆ Periodically monitor and update traffic conditions

TC-6.3 Require that all trip-generating development activity that is subject to site plan or special permit review includes adequate analysis and proposal of transportation demand management strategies, such as shared parking and van- and car-pooling incentives.

Action:

- ◆ [same as strategy]

Actions Listed by Strategy

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
Land Use								
LU-1.1	Remove potential regulatory barriers to mixed use development, including parking and dimensional requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review zoning and recommend changes (OPD) ◆ Evaluate and recommend changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	4	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	Assumes that ordinance amendments will be developed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$4,000 in fees plus 12 hours staff time.
LU-1.2	Amend the zoning ordinance to allow shared parking for uses with complementary parking demands (for example, mixed-use developments containing residential and commercial uses).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review zoning and recommend changes (OPD) ◆ Evaluate and recommend changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	4	2007+	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	Assumes that ordinance will be developed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$4,000 in fees plus 12 hours staff time.
LU-1.3	Consider implementing an expanded or more flexible parking waiver provision in the Zoning Ordinance to enable public amenities to be substituted for off-street parking, when deemed to advance goals of the Master Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide examples and recommend changes (OPD) ◆ Evaluate options and recommend (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	4	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	Assumes that ordinance will be developed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$4,000 in fees plus 12 hours staff time.
LU-2.1	Periodically evaluate the distribution of land use within the City's zoning districts and assess the extent to which such distribution matches established Master Plan goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review land use and zoning changes annually (OPD) 	4	Ongoing	Office of Planning & Devel.	\$0	20	Estimated staff hours are per year.
LU-2.2	Prepare a strategic plan for future development in the Industrial Park area, incorporating current information about natural systems and environmental constraints, and integrating conservation, recreation, development, and transportation issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identify funding source for project; appropriate funds and/or secure grant funding for consultant services (OPD, Mayor, CC) ◆ Prepare consultant Scope of Services (OPD) ◆ Select consultant and manage project (OPD) ◆ Prepare strategic plan (Consultant) ◆ Select an outside facilitator to manage the public process (Mayor) ◆ Hold a public forum/workshop to present alternatives and consider impacts (Facilitator, Mayor, OPD, Consultant) ◆ Evaluate forum/workshop outcomes and prepare draft policies on development, open space, and access (Mayor, OPD) ◆ Hold second public forum to present draft policy and solicit input (Facilitator, Mayor, OPD) ◆ Present strategic plan to Planning Board (Mayor, OPD) ◆ Adopt strategic plan as amendment to Master Plan (PB) ◆ Endorse strategic plan, including access policies (CC) 	1	2001-2002	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$40,000	230	<p>Funding is needed for consulting services</p> <p>Potential funding source: Executive Order 418 (Community Development Plans)</p> <p>Staff hours estimate assumes 30 hours for scope of services and consultant selection, plus average of 20 hours/month for contract management and consultant support (GIS, etc.) over 8 months, plus 40 hours for public process</p>

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Negotiate with property owners for acquisitions or easements to create open space networks and public access (Mayor, OPD, Open Space Committee) 						
LU-2.3	Rezone the I-B Industrial District to allow for office, high tech, research and development, light industrial, and other business uses that are of less impact to residential neighbors and that are consistent with anticipated market directions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prepare recommended changes (OPD) ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	2	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	40	Assumes that ordinance will be developed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$5,000 in fees plus 12 hours staff time.
LU-2.4	Consider creating an open space district within the zoning ordinance for public parks and reservations, and for unbuildable areas such as conservation easements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide examples to PB and Open Space Committee (OPD) ◆ Review protection needs and recommend areas for rezoning (Open Space Committee) ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	4	2007+	Office of Planning & Devel. Open Space Committee Planning Board City Council	\$0	40	Assumes that ordinance will be developed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$5,000 in fees plus 12 hours staff time.
LU-3.1	Address the quality of commercial design, particularly in key areas such as Storey Avenue, Route 1 Circle, Merrimac Street and Pond Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Draft zoning ordinance amendment to vest site plan review authority in the Planning Board for certain types of development, based on scale, location, or type of use (OPD) ◆ Prepare design guidelines for specific commercial districts (OPD) ◆ Recommend revisions to the site plan review ordinance with reference to design guidelines, and recommend a design review process for all new commercial development and major modifications (OPD) ◆ Review existing dimensional and design requirements for commercial and non-residential signs, and recommend sign ordinance amendments as appropriate (OPD) ◆ Draft requirements for natural or landscaped buffers for new highway commercial development adjoining existing residential neighborhoods (OPD) ◆ Evaluate and recommend ordinance changes (PB) ◆ Adopt ordinance amendments (CC) 	4	2002-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	120	Assumes that design guidelines and ordinance changes will be developed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Design guidelines and design review process: \$10,000 in fees plus 20 hours staff time ◆ Sign ordinance: \$5,000 in fees plus 10 hours staff time ◆ Buffer requirements: \$3,000 in fees plus 5 hours staff time
LU-3.2	Examine dimensional controls (setback, height, bulk, etc.) in order to determine standards that preserve the historic and traditional built form and patterns of existing neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Analyze development patterns on a neighborhood basis and define appropriate standards for each area (OPD) ◆ Review existing dimensional standards and recommend changes to ensure that building setbacks in historic neighborhoods are based upon the prevailing or traditional alignments of adjoining structures, and are related appropriately to building heights (OPD) ◆ Evaluate and recommend changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	1	Assume five neighborhood studies done in sequence (one per year) 2002-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	Year 1: 80 Years 2-5: 40	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$20,000 in fees plus 20 hours staff time.

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
LU-3.3	Review the current site plan standards and regulations and make any appropriate revisions to enhance the quality of industrial site design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prepare recommended changes (OPD) ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	5	2007+	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	40	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$5,000 in fees plus 10 hours staff time.
LU-4.1	Consider zoning incentives for proposed development that increases waterfront open space and public access opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prepare recommended changes (OPD) ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	1	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	40	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$5,000 in fees plus 10 hours staff time.
LU-4.2	Study and establish design guidelines to enhance the historic character of the waterfront while harmonizing proposed development with adjoining areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review previous waterfront planning documents and determine level of effort needed to complete work (OPD) ◆ Select consultant to prepare design guidelines (OPD) ◆ Adopt guidelines as amendment to Master Plan (PB) 	4	2004-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$5,000	20	
LU-4.3	Establish a set of design guidelines and public access provisions for the Waterfront Marine Dependent district (WMD) and the Waterfront Mixed Use district (WMU).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review previous waterfront planning documents and determine level of effort needed to complete work (OPD) ◆ Select consultant to prepare design guidelines (OPD) ◆ Adopt guidelines as amendment to Master Plan (PB) 	4	2004-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board	\$5,000	20	
LU-4.4	Reexamine the assets and shortcomings of the proposed Waterfront Overlay District, and strive to prepare a revised provision that is less complex, more effective, and lends itself to practical application to waterfront properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review proposed district regulations (OPD) ◆ Evaluate proposed regulations and recommend adoption (PB) ◆ Adopt new district and regulations (CC) 	2	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$5,000 in fees plus 10 hours staff time.
LU-4.5	Review array of permissible land uses along waterfront area to ensure future uses are compatible with Master Plan Goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review zoning and recommend changes as appropriate (OPD) ◆ Recommend ordinance changes (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	4	2004-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	10	
LU-5.1	Consider establishing design guidelines for the High Street Corridor relating to both built form and public realm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Carry out a survey of the corridor to identify positive design elements and threats to its character (OPD, HC) ◆ Evaluate existing zoning and other standards for their impact on important design elements (OPD, HC) ◆ Prepare design guidelines (consultant) ◆ Adopt guidelines as amendment to Master Plan (PB) 	2	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Historic Commission Planning Board	\$10,000	80	
LU-5.2	Implement a design review process to evaluate proposed development and redevelopment along the corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prepare zoning ordinance for new High Street design review overlay district (OPD) ◆ Review ordinance and recommend adoption (PB) ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC) 	4	2004-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	60	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$10,000 in fees plus 20 hours staff time.

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
LU-6.1	Discourage the reclassification of land area in the City into the Business One (B-1) zoning district designation. Implement any expansion in existing B-1 districts through the establishment of new Neighborhood Business (B-3) districts.	◆ Monitor proposals to expand B-1 zoning district (OPD)	5	Ongoing	Office of Planning & Devel.	\$0	0	
LU-6.2	Enact a zoning amendment to regulate sexually-oriented businesses and restrict them to the I-1 zoning district.	◆ Prepare ordinance (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC)	2	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$5,000 in fees plus 10 hours staff time.
LU-6.3	Update zoning district boundaries to correct existing inaccuracies, reduce incompatibilities, and consider recent land use changes.	◆ Use GIS to identify potential problem areas based on zoning/land use discrepancies, recent development, variance requests, etc. (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Adopt map amendments (CC)	4	2004-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	20	
LU-6.4	Review zoning district boundaries to ensure compatible streetscape (for example, Merrimac Street and Route 1, where residential zoning districts face nonresidential districts across the street).	◆ Review locations where zoning district boundaries run along a street; determine whether adjustments are advisable; prepare recommended map changes (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Adopt map amendments (CC)	5	2007+	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	80	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$10,000 in fees plus 20 hours staff time.
LU-7.1	Utilize the open space plan and element of the Master Plan to help guide farmland acquisition.	◆ Identify key farmland parcels for acquisition (OSC) ◆ Communicate with property owners regarding their plans for the parcels and City's interest (OSC) ◆ Recommend acquisition or other preservation measures as appropriate (OSC) ◆ Act on recommendations (ConCom, CC)	1	Ongoing	Open Space Committee Conservation Commission City Council	\$0	0	Refer to Strategy OSR-1.2
LU-7.2	Allow cluster development in the Agriculture-Conservation District in order to advance farmland preservation objectives.	◆ Review existing cluster zoning provision for potential application to existing farmland in the City and draft appropriate amendments (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Enact ordinance changes (CC)	2	2002-2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
LU-7.3	Investigate and explore the appropriateness of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) zoning provisions to advance farmland preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identify existing farmland parcels and likely development scenarios, including owners' motivations and market values (OPD) ◆ Analyze the economic feasibility of using TDR to preserve the parcels (OPD) ◆ Identify possible receiving areas for transferred density (OPD) ◆ If TDR appears feasible, prepare ordinance to create program and to designate sending and receiving areas (OPD) ◆ Review ordinance and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Adopt TDR ordinance (CC) 	2	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	60	
Housing								
H-1.1	Require developers to provide affordable units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Draft an inclusionary housing amendment to the zoning ordinance, to require additional affordable units with the issuance of special permits (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC) 	1	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	20	
H-1.2	Create incentives for developers to provide affordable single-family homes in new subdivisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Revise the existing density bonus in cluster subdivisions to enhance its potential to promote affordable housing (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Enact ordinance change (CC) 	3	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	
H-1.3	Continue to explore the feasibility of developing affordable first-time homebuyer units on the former DPW site on Merrimac Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Complete schematic design/density analysis ◆ Prepare Request for Proposals for development 	3	Ongoing	Office of Planning & Devel. Housing Authority City Council	\$0		
H-1.4	Support the Archdiocese of Boston in its goal of creating an appropriately scaled affordable housing development on Federal Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establish a task force including neighborhood residents and affordable housing advocates to work with the Archdiocese and its designated developer (Mayor) 	3	Ongoing	Mayor	\$0	0	Although this was not identified as a priority by participants, it is essential for the City to work with the Archdiocese as planning moves forward on this project
H-1.5	Review potential barriers to multifamily housing and housing affordability, by examining density and dimensional standards applicable to such uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review zoning ordinance and identify barriers or disincentives to the development of multifamily housing or affordable housing; recommend amendments as appropriate (OPD) ◆ Review recommended changes and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Enact ordinance amendments (CC) 	4	2004-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
H-1.6	Examine zoning incentives and design standards to promote affordable housing within the City's existing districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review existing zoning incentives and design standards and recommend amendments as appropriate to promote affordable housing (OPD) ◆ Review recommended amendments and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Enact ordinance amendments (CC) 	1	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	30	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$5,000 in fees plus 10 hours staff time.
H-2.1	Ensure consideration of "adequacy of infrastructure" in the review of subdivisions and special permit uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adapt or create a consistent community impact assessment model for subdivisions, and consider extending this to special permits (OPD) ◆ Adopt community impact assessment model as amendment to subdivision regulations (PB) ◆ Adopt special permit regulation requiring use of community impact assessment model (PB, CC) ◆ Propose standards and procedures for regulating new development at the City boundaries where access and services are proposed to be provided through an adjoining community (OPD) ◆ Adopt recommended standards and procedures (PB, CC) 	3	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	60	Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$15,000 in fees plus 20 hours staff time.
H-3.1	Establish design guidelines for the older neighborhoods relating to both built form and public realm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Analyze development patterns on a neighborhood basis and define appropriate design guidelines for each area (OPD) 	3	2004-2005	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board	\$0	100	Consider combining with actions under Strategy LU-3.2. Assumes that work will be performed by staff. If consulting services are used, estimate \$20,000 in fees plus 20 hours staff time.
H-3.2	Establish a design review process to evaluate proposed development and redevelopment within defined neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide examples and recommend approach (OPD) ◆ Evaluate options and recommend (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	3	2004-2005	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council			
H-4.1	Utilize a design and site plan review process for the review of new housing development that is appropriately calibrated to the extent of development proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide examples and recommend approach (OPD) ◆ Evaluate options and recommend (PB) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	3	2004-2005	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council			
H-4.2	Consider incentives and criteria within the City's Cluster Zoning provision to advance open space and natural and cultural resource preservation objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review existing zoning and recommend changes as appropriate (PB Subcommittee) ◆ Adopt revised ordinance (CC) 	2	2002-2003	Planning Board City Council			Coordinate with actions under Strategies OSR-1.3 and OSR-1.4

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
Economic Development								
ED-1.1	Reinforce the role of the Office of Planning and Development as the economic development office within city government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review OPD workload and staffing needs; identify any organizational changes to enhance economic development planning (Mayor) ◆ Consider creation of new economic development staff position within OPD (Mayor) 	2	2002	Mayor	\$0		Review of OPD staff needs should encompass other department responsibilities, including historic preservation, transportation planning, etc.
ED-1.2	Continue participation in the Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Committee, NAID, and the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council.	◆ [same as strategy]	4	Ongoing	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel.			
ED-1.3	Consider providing available economic development financing incentives, such as tax increment financing (TIF), where appropriate to support desirable development.	◆ [same as strategy]	3	2003	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. City Council			
ED-1.4	Reinvigorate marine industries such as commercial fishing and boat building and repair.	◆ [none identified]	4	2004-2006				
ED-1.5	Promote the restoration of clam harvesting in the Merrimack River estuary.	◆ [none identified]	3	Ongoing				
ED-2.1	Promote regional efforts to encourage heritage tourism and ecotourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Continue participation and coordination with the Essex National Heritage Area (Mayor, OPD, Chamber of Commerce) ◆ Support ENHA effort to designate and promote a National Scenic Byway along Routes 1A and 133 from Newburyport to Gloucester (Mayor, OPD, Chamber of Commerce) ◆ Evaluate the possibility for designation of a Merrimack River Scenic Byway from Newburyport to Haverhill and Lawrence (OPD, Chamber of Commerce) 	4	Ongoing	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. Chamber of Commerce			
ED-2.2	Promote the development of lodging and other services, where appropriate and feasible, to support the desired level of heritage tourism and ecotourism.	◆ [none identified]	2	2003	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. Chamber of Commerce			
ED-3.1	Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for health and wellness services.	◆ [none identified]	4	Ongoing				
ED-3.2	Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for arts, dining, entertainment and culture.	◆ [none identified]	3	Ongoing				
ED-3.3	Strengthen and maintain the City's position as a regional center for banking, insurance, legal and similar professional services.	◆ [none identified]	4	Ongoing				

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
Natural and Cultural Resources								
NCR-1.1	Identify necessary actions to reopen Merrimack River clam flats.	◆ Continue working with regional planning agencies	4	Ongoing	Merrimack Valley P.C.			
NCR-1.2	Work with regional organizations such as Eight Towns and the Bay and the Merrimack River Watershed Association to improve water quality.	◆ [same as strategy]	2	Ongoing	Mayor Sewer Commission Water Department Office of Planning & Devel. Conservation Commission Planning Board			
NCR-1.3	Implement measures to reduce nonpoint source pollution of rivers and streams.	◆ Continue working with regional planning agencies to become educated and take appropriate actions	4	Ongoing	Merrimack Valley P.C. Office of Planning & Devel. City Council Conservation Commission Department of Public Works			
NCR-1.4	Amend subdivision and site plan review regulations to ensure compliance with Stormwater Phase III requirements.	◆ Prepare necessary amendments (OPD) ◆ Adopt amended regulations (PB)	2	2002	Dept. of Public Works Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board	\$0	20	Although not identified as a priority by participants, the City is required to comply by 2003 under US EPA regulations
NCR-1.5	Consider creating a position of Conservation Agent to assist the Conservation Commission in review of development proposals and monitoring of improvements.	◆ Review ConCom workload and staff needs (Mayor, ConCom) ◆ Create position if advisable (Mayor, CC)	2	2002	Mayor Conservation Commission City Council	\$60,000/yr.	20	
NCR-2.1	Consider establishment of local historic districts using the City's Preservation Plan as a base.	◆ Vote to create Historic District Study Committee (CC) ◆ Appoint HDSC members (Mayor, CC) ◆ Review existing historic properties survey; update as necessary; select historic district(s) and district boundaries; prepare required reports (HDSC) ◆ Hold public hearing(s) as required (HDSC) ◆ Adopt historic district(s) (CC) ◆ Appoint Historic District Commission (Mayor, CC)	1	2002-2004	Historic Commission Office of Planning & Devel. City Council			
NCR-2.2	Review design standards in the subdivision regulations and consider possible amendments for developments in the older area of the city.	◆ Review design standards and their impacts on recent subdivisions (OPD, PB) ◆ Prepare revisions as appropriate and submit to Planning Board (OPD) ◆ Adopt revisions to subdivision regulations (PB)	3	2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board			
NCR-2.3	Consider adoption of a demolition delay ordinance.	◆ Review alternatives and present to Historic Commission (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend action (HC) ◆ Adopt ordinance (CC)	2	2002	Historic Commission Office of Planning & Devel. City Council	\$0	20	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
Open Space and Recreation								
OSR-1.1	Create a permanent open space committee to monitor opportunities for open space acquisition.	◆ Appoint Open Space Committee (Mayor)	2	Completed	Mayor	\$0	0	
OSR-1.2	Prioritize open space for protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review Open Space and Recreation Plan for guidance on priority open space needs (OSC) ◆ Evaluate unprotected land currently under the jurisdiction of city agencies to determine whether additional protection for open space and recreation is appropriate (OSC) ◆ Evaluate undeveloped privately-owned parcels for their ability to address priority open space needs, and identify protection techniques appropriate to each parcel (OSC) ◆ Monitor the status of Chapter 61/61A/61B parcels and recommend City actions as appropriate (OSC) 	1	2002	Open Space Committee	\$0	0	
OSR-1.3	Promote cluster residential development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review existing cluster zoning provision and recommend changes to make cluster development a preferred option for developers (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for adoption (PB) ◆ Enact ordinance changes (CC) 	2	2002-2003	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	40	See also Strategy H-4.2
OSR-1.4	Review subdivision regulations to ensure protection of open space in conjunction with residential development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review existing regulations and recommend appropriate changes (OPD) ◆ Review and adopt recommended changes (PB) 	3	2002-2004	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board			See also Strategy H-4.2
OSR-2.1	Continue planning and development of a multi-use recreational trail.	◆ [same as strategy]	3	Ongoing	Office of Planning & Devel. F.O.O.T.			
OSR-2.2	Support development of the Border to Boston Trail.	◆ [same as strategy]	5	Ongoing	Office of Planning & Devel. F.O.O.T.			
OSR-2.3	Enhance the Merrimack River Trail.	◆ [none identified]	4	2004-2006	Office of Planning & Devel. F.O.O.T. Open Space Committee			
OSR-3.1	Analyze existing playfield facilities with respect to the standard of 1 acre per 800 residents and identify any shortfall.	◆ [same as strategy]	3	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Park Commission			Address this action in the preparation of the next update of the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan (due in 2002)
OSR-3.2	Review utilization of existing fields and determine needed management changes and/or new fields needed.	◆ [same as strategy]	3	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Park Commission			Address this action in the preparation of the next update of the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan (due in 2002)

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
OSR-3.3	Explore use of City-owned parcels on Plum Island for their potential as waterfront access points.	◆ [same as strategy]	3	2002	Office of Planning & Devel.			Address this action in the preparation of the next update of the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan (due in 2002)
OSR-4.1	Monitor development subject to Chapter 91 license requirements and negotiate the provision of appropriate public access.	◆ [same as strategy]	3	Ongoing	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel.			
OSR-5.1	Study existing boating facilities and uses and determine whether there is a need for limitations on expansion.	◆ [same as strategy]	4	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Harbormaster			Address this action in the preparation of an updated Harbor Management Plan
OSR-5.2	Enhance and expand facilities and services for transient boating, including slips, water, electric hookup, lavatories, showers, laundry, maintenance and security.	◆ [none identified]	3	2003-2005	Harbormaster			
OSR-5.3	Find new ways for Newburyport citizens to enjoy the river.	◆ Develop a plan for creation of a community boathouse and establishment of public sailing and boating programs	3	2003-2005				Address this action in the preparation of the next update of the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan (due in 2004) and in the updated Harbor Management Plan
Public Facilities and Services								
PFS-1.1	Implement a capital improvement program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Designate Office of Planning and Development to coordinate the CIP (CC) ◆ Prepare an inventory of existing capital facilities (All department heads, boards and commissions) ◆ Establish level of service standards (Department heads) ◆ Forecast demand for services (OPD) ◆ Solicit, compile and evaluate project requests (OPD) ◆ Establish project priorities (Departments, OPD) ◆ Assess the City's fiscal capacity (Mayor, Treasurer, Assessor) ◆ Develop a CIP financing plan (Mayor, OPD, Treasurer) ◆ Prepare capital improvement program (OPD) ◆ Update capital improvement program annually 	1	2002-2003	City Council Mayor Treasurer Assessor All department heads, boards and commissions	\$0	Year 1: 250 Years 2+: 50	
PFS-1.2	Support initiatives to support responsible maintenance of public facilities regardless of economic flux.	◆ [none identified]	3	Ongoing	Mayor City Council			

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
PFS-1.3	Concurrent with construction of new facilities, provide adequate budget to ensure long-term maintenance of public facilities.	◆ [same as strategy]	3	Ongoing	Mayor City Council			
PFS-2.1	Foster closer coordination between the school department and city government in order to maximize the efficient utilization of existing facilities.	◆ [same as strategy]	2	Ongoing	Mayor City Council School Committee Superintendent of Schools			
PFS-2.2	Establish a senior center at the National Guard Armory site as recommended by the May 1999 DCAM feasibility study.	◆ Work with Senior Center Building Committee to work with designer and begin plans for construction	1	2002-2004	Office of Planning & Devel. Senior Center Building Committee	\$1.5M	500	Refer to DCAM study
PFS-5.1	Investigate system financing options and alternative rate structures in order to encourage conservation	◆ [same as strategy]	3	2002	Water Commission	\$10,000	20	Assumes consultant study with recommendations
Transportation and Circulation								
TC-1.1	Identify key intersections and periodically monitor levels of service and safety at these locations.	◆ Periodically monitor and update traffic conditions	5	Ongoing	Mayor Police Department	\$10,000	0	Costs of engineering studies – estimate \$10,000 per year
TC-2.1	Implement recommendations of the Downtown Waterfront Area Traffic Study.	◆ Install traffic signals on Merrimac Street at both the southbound and the northbound ramps of Route 1 ◆ Upgrade the existing signal at the intersection of Merrimac Street and Green Street	4	2004-2006		Unknown		
TC-2.2	Minimize potential adverse effects of physical traffic control measures	◆ Reduce speed limits consistent with currently advocated limits for pedestrian safety in “congested village areas” to reduce need for physical changes	2					
TC-4.1	Create one or more parking facilities in order to replace any spaces removed from the NRA lots and to provide for growth in the downtown.	◆ Develop parking management plan for the downtown area, to guide financing and management of all public parking spaces and facilities (OPD, Mayor, Police Dept.) ◆ Develop plan for creating new facilities if necessary, including timetable and financing program (OPD, Mayor) ◆ Acquire land for new facilities (OPD, Mayor, CC) ◆ Secure funding for facility design and construction (OPD, Mayor, CC) ◆ Finalize facility design (OPD) ◆ Construct parking facilities (OPD)	1	Mgmt. Plan, 2002 Facility Plan, 2002 Financing, 2003 Construction, 2004-2006	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. City Council	\$7.1M	1,000	Construction costs per parking space: Surface: \$ ____ ; Structures: \$20,000-25,000; Underground: \$30,000-35,000
TC-4.2	Reduce off-street parking requirements in the downtown to between 50% and 75% of the requirements for other parts of the City.	◆ Prepare amendment to zoning ordinance (OPD) ◆ Review and recommend for approval (PD) ◆ Adopt zoning amendment (CC)	4	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0	10	Although not identified as a priority, this is a simple zoning change that can make life easier for downtown property owners and businesses.

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
TC-4.3	Explore the use of existing parking lots (rail station and bus station) for satellite parking in conjunction with frequent and well-coordinated public transit to reduce central business district parking demand, especially during peak demand periods.	◆ [none identified]	4	2004-2006	Parking and Traffic Committee	Unknown	0	
TC-5.1	Prepare and implement a sidewalk plan to address safety issues.	◆ Inventory and map safety issues (DPW) ◆ Schedule improvements and incorporate into Capital Improvement Program (DPW, OPD)	2	2002-2003	Dept. of Public Works Office of Planning & Devel.	Unknown		
TC-6.1	Develop off-road multi-use trails where possible.	◆ [none identified]	4	Ongoing	Dept. of Public Works F.O.O.T.			Trail costs are \$ ___ to \$ ___ per mile
TC-6.2	Ensure that design and site plan review process includes review of proposed pedestrian and bicycle amenities proposed in relation to new development and redevelopment.	◆ [same as strategy]	4	2002	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0		This was not identified as a priority, but should be incorporated in updates of site plan review and subdivision regulations
TC-6.3	Require that all trip-generating development activity that is subject to site plan or special permit review includes adequate analysis and proposal of transportation demand management strategies, such as shared parking and van- and car-pooling incentives.	◆ [same as strategy]	5	2007+	Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board City Council	\$0		
TC-7.1	Identify and remove existing barriers to disabled persons.	◆ Inventory barriers in public facilities (DPW) ◆ Schedule improvements and incorporate in Capital Improvement Program (DPW, OPD)	1	Ongoing	Dept. of Public Works	Unknown		Although not identified as a priority by participants, the removal of barriers is a City responsibility and must be implemented on an ongoing basis, particularly when facilities are being renovated or upgraded. Accessible curb cuts: \$ ___ ea.; often can be installed as part of larger projects
Master Plan Implementation								
MPI-2.1	Ensure that all future strategic plans include references to the Master Plan, and that data and analyses developed in strategic planning processes are incorporated into the Master Plan.	◆ Include reference to the Master Plan in all strategic and functional plans, including Water System Master Plan, Wastewater Management Plan, downtown studies, traffic plans, Open Space and Recreation Plan, etc. (all City departments, commissions, boards, and officials) ◆ Annually review planning documents to ensure that Master Plan is referenced, and to extract relevant data and analyses for update to Master Plan (OPD)	3	Ongoing	City Council Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. Sewer Commission Water Commission Planning Board	\$0	20/yr.	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-5)	Timetable	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hrs.	Notes
MPI-2.2	Develop data collection and reporting procedures for City departments that will facilitate monitoring of change and updating of the Master Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Order that Planning Director shall have primary responsibility for implementing the Master Plan and shall issue an annual "State of the Master Plan" report to joint session of City Council and Planning Board (CC) ◆ Present an annual "State of the Master Plan" report to review the status of strategies and actions and report on significant changes in trends or indicators (Planning Director) ◆ Hold an annual public forum in conjunction with the "State of the Master Plan" report to provide an opportunity for residents to continue the public participation process (Mayor, OPD) ◆ Hold periodic community planning forums in order to inform discussion and decision-making on important planning issues (OPD) 	3	2001	City Council Mayor Office of Planning & Devel.	\$0	40/yr.	Although not identified as a top priority by participants, this strategy and its supporting actions are critical for assuring progress on Master Plan implementation and continuing public involvement in planning
MPI-3.1	Support and actively participate in the efforts of public and private organizations and entities that promote regional planning, interlocal cooperation, and coordination.	◆ [same as strategy]	4	Ongoing	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. Planning Board	\$0	Unknown	
MPI-4.1	Assess the feasibility of adopting the provisions of the Community Preservation Act, under which a property tax surcharge may be enacted for projects relating to affordable housing, open space and historic preservation.	◆ [same as strategy]	2	2002	Mayor City Council	\$0	40	
MPI-4.2	Pursue planning grants, such as those available under Executive Order 418, in order to pay for planning studies recommended in the Master Plan as well as supplementing existing city planning efforts.	◆ [same as strategy]	4	Ongoing	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. City Council	\$0	40/yr.	Some grants have requirements for local matching funds.
MPI-4.3	Identify and implement financial incentives for studios, exhibit and performance spaces, and artists housing, in order to support the role of the arts in Newburyport by encouraging artists to live and work in the City.	◆ Consider establishing an Arts District within which tax and other incentives would be available to artists and craftspersons (such districts have been established in Lowell, Worcester and Providence)	4	2003	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. City Council	\$0	80	Indirect cost to City through tax incentives
MPI-4.4	Identify roadway, streetscape, signing, and visitor facility improvements along Route 1A that might be funded through the National Scenic Byways Program upon designation of the road as a National Scenic Byway.	◆ [same as strategy]	4	2003	Mayor Office of Planning & Devel. Dept. of Public Works Chamber of Commerce			