

Chapter 10

Municipal Facilities & Services

In Massachusetts, municipalities are responsible for administering and delivering nearly all city or town services. Municipal facilities and services are structured to respond to a community's priorities and desires in terms of providing a satisfactory quality of life for its residents. Together, public buildings and facilities, land infrastructure, equipment, personnel and financial resources make it possible for the City's employees, boards, committees and commissions to provide services for residents and businesses and to conduct Newburyport's day-to-day operations.

This chapter focuses mainly on the capacity of local government to plan for, finance and deliver services. Newburyport's population growth has not been significant over the past few years, so capital facility needs are focused on deferred maintenance and renovating or replacing obsolete buildings and infrastructure rather than accommodating a larger population. The challenges involve financing the typically desired local services in a State with fluctuating aid policies, a cap on property taxes and no authority for cities and towns to collect impact fees.

The balance between increased demand for public services and the residents' desire to keep taxes from increasing is a delicate one, presenting challenges to local officials and policy makers in finding creative means to provide more with less. Deferral of expenditures for upgrading, replacing or expanding facilities commonly proves to be short sighted and results in significant expenditures the longer these items go unaddressed. Accordingly, Newburyport has in recent years been carefully framing long-range capital plans and devising means of identifying needs and financing their implementation.

Section A: General Government

Newburyport's general government consists of the central policy and administrative services that a community needs in order to carry out its statutory and corporate obligations. This includes the Mayor, financial operations (Finance Department, Treasurer/Collector and Assessors), human resources, information systems, the City Clerk, land use and permitting (Planning, Conservation, and Zoning Board of Appeals) and the legislative arm of government, the City Council.

Administration and Finance

Newburyport's Mayor directs the day-to-day work of City government, carrying out policies the City Council adopts and coordinating with departments not directly under the Council's purview. The Mayor's Office has a total of three full-time staff, including the Mayor, the Chief Administrative Officer and an Executive Assistant. The Mayor's office also employs a part-time Grant Writer who researches and submits applications for state and federal grants on behalf of all City departments. Newburyport's Finance Department oversees the City's financial operations and includes the City Auditor's Office, Treasurer/Collector's Office and the Assessor's Office. The Department is responsible for the procurement of equipment, materials, supplies and services.

The Office of the City Auditor coordinates and manages financial services within local government including budget preparation, financial reporting, revenue forecasting and establishing control systems to ensure that all financial transactions are carried out in accordance with all applicable laws. The Treasurer's Office administers and collects all real estate and property taxes, including motor vehicle excise and boat excise

taxes. The Assessor's Office estimates the value of all real personal property within Newburyport and maintains City records for real estate and personal property tax billing, motor vehicle billing and boat excise tax billing.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department was created by City Ordinance in 2013 with the mission of providing quality customer service to City employees, retirees and the general public for all staffing-related items. The two-person department serves as the primary contact for those individuals seeking information in the following areas: recruitment, hiring, benefits, compensation, labor relations and employee relations. The Human Resources department located at City Hall addresses only City employees, as the School Department has its own Human Resources staff.

Information Systems

Newburyport created its Information Services Department in the early 2000s. The City's two-person office handles a wide variety of responsibilities from a small office in the Police Station. The Department is the lead and support for the City in the appropriate application of existing and emerging information technologies and is dedicated to developing and maintaining an information structure that enhances the ability of City officials and staff to provide the highest level of service to the citizens of Newburyport.

City Clerk

The City Clerk is the official keeper of records. Newburyport residents likely come into more contact with the City Clerk than with any other elected or appointed official. The Clerk is responsible for not only maintaining and certifying documents, but also for managing the Parking Program, offering Passport Services, conducting local, state and federal elections, issuing a variety of licenses and certificates, administering the annual City census, and maintaining records of permitting and licensing decisions by boards and commissions. Recently, the Clerk's Office has been scanning records in an effort to organize and preserve public documents and reduce the need for storage space, which is at a premium.

Land Use & Permitting

The Office of Planning and Development is the City's chief planning and development agency. The overall goal of the Office is to enhance Newburyport's physical environment and improve the quality of life for all who live, work, and visit the City. Planning Office staff seeks community input and ideas in order to identify and reflect common goals, and advises elected and appointed officials. Office staff develops plans, policies and projects to guide the City's physical and economic development, affordable housing, historic preservation and environmental conservation. The Office also provides staff support to several of the city's volunteer permitting entities, helps with procedural matters, and provides guidance through the solicitation of legal and expert opinions on questions as they arise.

- **Planning Board** – The Planning Board is a nine-member board of volunteers appointed for up to five-year terms by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Board considers land subdivision and zoning proposals, site plan review applications and proposed changes to elements of the City's Master Plan. In its deliberation, the Board actively supports smart growth objectives and the goals of the Master Plan. The Board holds public hearings, as required, on these applications and makes recommendations to the City Council for its consideration and legislative action.

- **Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)** – The role and responsibility of the ZBA is to provide relief, where appropriate, from literal application of the City’s Zoning Ordinance. The Board, which is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council for terms of up to five years, has the statutory authority to grant zoning exceptions and relief, to hear appeals of actions taken by the Building Commissioner and to act on comprehensive permits filed under M.G. L. c. 40B. The Board seeks balance between the property rights of the applicant and the interests of neighboring property owners and the City as a whole. The ZBA, while an independent board, works closely with the Planning Office, the Planning Director and the Planning Board.
- **Conservation Commission** – The Commission’s primary function is to review project applications and make determinations pursuant to the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. c. 131 § 40) and the local Newburyport Wetlands Ordinance. The Commission is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council for three-year terms and holds and monitors several Conservation Restrictions on protected lands throughout the City.

City Council

Newburyport is governed by an elected, eleven-member City Council consisting of five councilors-at-large and six ward councilors each serving two-year terms. The Council votes on the City budget, capital projects and land acquisitions, local ordinances and other matters requiring approval by the legislative body. Except as otherwise provided by general law or by City Charter, all powers of the City shall be vested in the City Council, which shall provide for their exercise and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed upon the City by law.

Section B: Public Safety

The Police Department, Fire Department, Harbormaster, Building Inspector and Board of Health form the backbone of the public safety services in Newburyport.

Police Department

The Police Department has 40 employees, including the City Marshal, two lieutenants, six sergeants, two detectives and 23 patrolmen. Additionally, there is an administrative assistant, four dispatchers and two part-time employees (custodian and records secretary). Aside from the traditional law enforcement and investigation functions of a local police department, Newburyport’s department provides education, training and support services to the schools, issues firearms licenses according to state law requirements, operates a dive team and houses a unit specializing in domestic violence and sexual assault.

Fire Department

The Fire Department provides coverage with 39 employees including the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, an administrative assistant, dispatchers and firefighters. The Department’s duties range from fire suppression and prevention to code inspections, licensing and permitting of flammable materials, inspections of underground storage tank installation and removal, public education, investigations and rescue operations. Currently, 32 of the 39 employees are certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), which means they have the qualifications to provide Basic Life Support services; the balance have minimum certifications as First Responders and one of those is a licensed nurse.

Newburyport Emergency Management Agency

The Newburyport Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is responsible for providing a comprehensive and integrated management system that coordinates local, state, and Federal resources in the event of an expected or unexpected emergency. NEMA works closely with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in planning, response, mitigation, and recovery activities including those required by the radiological response plan for the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant. NEMA is also the coordinating agency for all assets and needs that our local responders and field commanders may require for any particular emergency, natural, or man-made.

The NEMA office is currently located in the Emergency Operations Center on Low Street in a building owned by the Federal government. Integrating NEMA's operation into the Central Fire Station is planned when the Fire Department's main building is renovated and expanded.

Harbormaster Department

The primary task of the Harbormaster Department is the management and safety on the waterways of Newburyport. The Department patrols the river and harbor to enforce State and local laws, manages the Cashman Park boat launching facility and central waterfront docks and provides a waste water pump out vessel and shore facility. Additionally, the Department manages the Plum Island parking lot and the lifeguards who patrol the public beaches.

Building Department

The Building Department, located in City Hall, includes a full-time Building Commissioner, a full-time Assistant Building Inspector, an administrative assistant and a clerk. The Building Department ensures that all code requirements are satisfied during the permitting process, inspects construction sites to ensure safety and code compliance, enforces the Newburyport Zoning Ordinance and State Building Codes, imposes fines for violations and issues occupancy permits.

Board of Health

The City's three-member Board of Health is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council; each member serves a term of three years. The Board oversees the Newburyport Health Department and the Director of Public Health. Together, with the Director managing the day-to-day responsibilities of the Department and the Board overseeing policy-level decisions, they are responsible for the health and well-being of the citizens through the following: enforcement of health and safety codes, emergency preparedness and response, disease and injury prevention, promoting and offering immunization clinics, providing health education and prevention programs, responding to health hazards, ensuring water quality, monitoring waste disposal, and investigating noise and air pollution.

The Board of Health, through the City's Health Department, manages mosquito control through the City's membership in the Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control and Wetlands Management District ("the District"). Originally called the Essex County Mosquito Control Project, the District was established in 1950 as a response to public demand for relief from diminished property values, public health risks and residents' inability to enjoy summer activities due to extreme mosquito populations. Governed at the State level by the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board, municipalities may opt to subscribe to the District's services by a majority vote of a town meeting or by vote of a Board of Selectman or City Council and approval of the

Mayor. A municipality must remain a subscriber for three years, after which they may withdraw. Municipal assessments are calculated by the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services in accordance with Chapter 516, GLC. Assessments are charged to the local aid (cherry sheet) assessments.

The District performs trapping and aerial and ground spraying services for the City. The Newburyport DPS baits catch basins throughout the City. If West Nile or EEE is found in a trapped mosquito, the City, through the Health Department, notifies the community-at-large so that additional precautions may be taken. While the District performs all aerial and ground spraying for the community, property owners may opt out by notifying the Health Department by March 1st of every year.

Section C: Department of Public Services

Newburyport has a Department of Public Services (DPS) that manages traditional public works functions. The DPS employs sixty-six workers year-round and, each summer, hires eight college-aged students to work for approximately nine weeks. The DPS through its Water, Sewer and Highway Divisions, takes care of the City's public roads, including paving and pavement repairs, cleaning drainage systems, maintaining City trees, trimming roadside vegetation, maintaining public cemeteries, installing and replacing signs, plowing, sanding and street sweeping. During the winter, Newburyport supplements its DPS crew with snow and ice removal sub-contractors on an as-needed basis; these sub-contractors typically increase the plowing fleet by twenty vehicles.

Facilities Maintenance

The Facilities Maintenance staff is a team of six that oversee the general maintenance for City Hall, the Public Library, Newburyport Youth Services, the Senior Community Center, the public bathrooms located on the waterfront and the Emma Andrews Branch Library. The staff handles all snow removal at these locations as well as the downtown's sidewalks. **Table MFS-1** below lists all of the municipal buildings.

Table MFS-1: Inventory of Municipal Buildings

Name	Address	Comments
City Hall	60 Pleasant Street	Administrative offices
Department of Public Works Garage	16A Perry Way	Administrative offices, vehicle and equipment storage
Newburyport Public Library	94 State Street	Public Library
Emma Andrews Library	77 Purchase Street	Independent, volunteer-run lending library
Police Station	4 Green Street	Police Department
Recycling Center	Crow Lane	Drop-off center for a variety of recyclable materials
Central Fire Station	1 Greenleaf Street	Main Fire Station
Cutter Fire Station	153 Storey Avenue	Branch Fire Station
Filter Station/Water Treatment Plant	7 Spring Lane	Public water treatment plant
Sewer Plant/Pumping Station	115 Water Street	Public sewer treatment plant with a full upgrade completed in 2014.
Firehouse Center for the Arts	1 Merrimac Street	City-owned building with theater, leased to the Firehouse Center for the Arts – who is responsible for all maintenance and upkeep.
Harbormaster Shack, Docks and Pier	Central Waterfront	Administrative offices for the harbormaster and public docks. A new facility is in the planning stages with construction

		anticipated to begin in Spring 2016
Powder House	Low Street	Historic structure, park and educational center.
Emergency Operations Center	59 Low Street	Gathering facility for public safety managers to meet and respond to small- and large-scale emergencies.
Senior Community Center	High Street	Houses all programming for the senior community. DPS is responsible for the complete maintenance of the facility as well as providing custodial and other services for evening events booked into the facility.
Public Schools		
Bresnahan School	333 High Street	Elementary school (grades Pre-K – 3). This brand new building opened its doors in Fall 2014.
Brown School	40 Milk Street	No longer in use as a school, the Department of Youth Services occupies the first floor and gym. The upper two stories are vacant with the City exploring potential re-use options.
Nock/Molin School	70 Low Street	One building with two distinct sections: The Nock is for grades 4-5 and the Molin is for Grades 6-8. This building received upgrades and improvements in Winter 2015.
Newburyport High School	241 High Street	Public high school, grades 9-12.

In addition to maintenance of the public buildings, DPS is also in charge of general maintenance for municipal vehicles that are off-warranty. The City does not currently have a vehicle replacement plan; but instead operates on revolving leases.

Water Division

The Water Division, part of DPS, consists of three subdivisions: Water Operations, Construction and Administration. The Water Operations staff is located at the Water Treatment Plant (staffed 24 hours per day) at 7 Spring Lane. The staff manages three reservoirs and two wells and operates one pumping station, the treatment plant and two storage tanks and is responsible for maintaining the quality of Newburyport's drinking water. The Construction staff is located at the DPS facility on Perry Way. The staff is responsible for maintaining over 80 miles of water main throughout the City, the Old Town portion of Newbury and Plum Island. They maintain fire hydrants, valves, fix breaks, replace old water mains, install and inspect new water services, replace meters and respond to emergencies around the clock. The Administrative Office is responsible for all billing issues, as well as responding to customer phone calls and scheduling of meter readings, installations and repairs.

Sewer Division

The Sewer Division is charged with providing the rate payers of Newburyport with cost effective wastewater collection, pumping, and treatment services, while simultaneously improving and maintaining the City's infrastructure. Similar to the Water Division, the Sewer Division consists of three divisions: Treatment, Operations and Administration. The Treatment staff is located at the City's new Wastewater Treatment Plant at 115 Water Street. The Operations and Administrative staff are located at the DPS facility on Perry Way.

Sewer Collection System Upgrades

The City has adequate capacity to provide the necessary wastewater treatment needs for current and anticipated development throughout the community. The City completed a multi-million dollar upgrade in 2014 to its Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP); while the upgrade increased capacity and functionality of

the system, some remaining odor problems are being addressed through upgrades and retrofits currently underway. While a variety of factors influence odor controls at the WWTP, including weather conditions and rain, the City continues to work with consultants to adjust and balance the system to improve odor controls. A \$6 million mitigation project is scheduled for completion in 2018.

A new Graf Road Sewer Pump Station is now under construction to accommodate increased flows generated by additional residential, commercial and industrial development in the southern portion of the City. The station serves a large catchment area spanning Storey Avenue, along Low Street to the Route 1 Traffic Circle, including the Newburyport Business & Industry Park as well as the area proposed for a 40R Smart Growth District (for additional information about the proposed 40R, see Chapter 4: Land Use Planning & Development).

Highway Division

The Highway Division seeks to provide the most efficient, economical and responsible customer service and maintenance for the following areas of responsibility: public roadways and sidewalks, including City trees; public drain systems including pipes, catch basins, manholes, ditches and outfalls; burials and maintenance of Highland Cemetery; parking lots and public green areas; de-icing and snow removal during storms; daily city-wide trash removal for all public areas; and a 24-hour emergency on-call crew. The Highway department also provides support to the Parks Department.

Section D: Human Services

Newburyport's human services system includes the Council on Aging, Veteran's Agent, Public Library, Newburyport Youth Services, and the Commission on Disabilities. These groups, together, provide services, educational opportunities and programming to meet the various needs of the community.

Council on Aging

The Council on Aging offers information services, transportation assistance and social, recreational, educational and health programs to Newburyport's senior community. The Council's offices and programs are located at the Senior Community Center, which provides state-of-the-art, dedicated space for senior programming. The Council provides programs including: advocacy of senior issues; housing assistance; tax preparation and financial planning; exercise classes; and a work-off program that allows seniors to volunteer for various City departments and officials for 125 hours in return for a tax abatement worth \$1,500. Additionally, the Council coordinates a Meals-on-Wheels program that delivers food to home-bound seniors every weekday.

Veteran's Services

The Veteran's Service Officer is a full-time employee who aids and assists veterans by disbursing and administering a program of cash benefits and medical care, administers annuities, bonuses, license plates and flags for veteran's graves and provides a variety of other programs serving veterans' needs. The officer also performs these services in Merrimac, Amesbury, and Salisbury.

Newburyport Public Library

The Newburyport Public Library is governed by a Board of Library Trustees appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council for seven-year terms. The Library has fifteen full-time and six part-time staff

members, including the library director. Its collection includes books, periodicals, downloadable audio and e-books, language learning materials, music services, compact discs, videos/DVDs, and databases, with a total of 115,000 items and an annual circulation of approximately 280,000 transactions. In addition to its collection, the Library offers free and discounted museum passes to a variety of institutions located in Boston and throughout the region. The Library maintains a full calendar of community events and programming including lectures, book discussion groups, crafting events and movie showings. The Library also manages and maintains the Archival Center and its collection of published monographs on Newburyport history and individual family genealogies as well as local primary source material.

Newburyport Parks

Newburyport Parks Department and Newburyport Parks Commission protect, improve, and maintain Newburyport's open space assets, and connect people with nature through parks and adult recreation programming. The Parks Department maintains all parks, school athletic fields, and the skate park, manages pet waste, and manages snow and ice clearing in all parks including those sidewalks not otherwise cleared by DPS. The Department permits organized use of parks, including weddings, races, community events, fundraisers, etc. and works with the schools to schedule field space. The Department plans use of parkland and manages improvement projects. The Department offers volunteer programs for residents who wish to help with parks beautification and offers recreational programming for area adults.

Newburyport Youth Services

Newburyport Youth Services (NYS) creates quality programming and events for Newburyport's youth in safe and supportive environments. NYS also acts as an advocate for the youth so that their ideas, concerns and needs are heard and addressed by the Newburyport community. Located in the Brown School (no longer in use as a school), NYS provides after school programming, health and safety training classes, sports programs, and summer youth programs.

In addition to providing quality programming and events for Newburyport's youth, one of NYS' largest initiatives was the creation of The BEACON Coalition (TBC), which evolved from an existing Mayor's Task Force on underage substance abuse. TBC engages partners from throughout the City in a shared effort to reduce adolescent high risk behaviors. This community-wide partnership is comprised from all sectors of the community, including public safety, non-profit organizations, public schools and the local media, and together they work to create meaningful opportunities and collaboratively support and strengthen youth assets through programming, training and initiatives.

Commission on Disabilities

The Newburyport Commission on Disabilities is comprised of between seven and nine members serving three-year terms. The Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council and work to advocate to the community and the various permitting boards and decision-makers within City government regarding disability related issues, concerns and opportunities. The Commission is an advisory, educational and advocacy group for the Newburyport community that (1) promotes the full inclusion of all persons with disabilities; (2) represents and assists people with disabilities; (3) eliminates barriers to any and all activities, services, and employment opportunities; and (4) advocates for the accessibility of all public spaces and accommodations.

Regionalization of Services

The City currently shares Animal Control services and Veteran's Services with neighboring communities. The Town of West Newbury pays a portion of the costs associated with employing an Animal Control Officer (ACO). This agreement is solidified through an Inter-municipal Agreement (IMA) with West Newbury that is up for renewal each year through a vote of the City Council. Veterans' services are provided to Newburyport, Amesbury, Merrimac and Salisbury utilizing an Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) signed by the four communities. Services are provided in two locations – the Amesbury Senior Center and the Newburyport Senior Community Center. Both the Veterans' Agent and the part-time assistant are Newburyport employees and costs are shared among the four communities; costs are determined through a formula utilizing population and veteran caseload. The IMA is renewed each year in December through a vote of the City Council.

Section E: Newburyport Public Schools

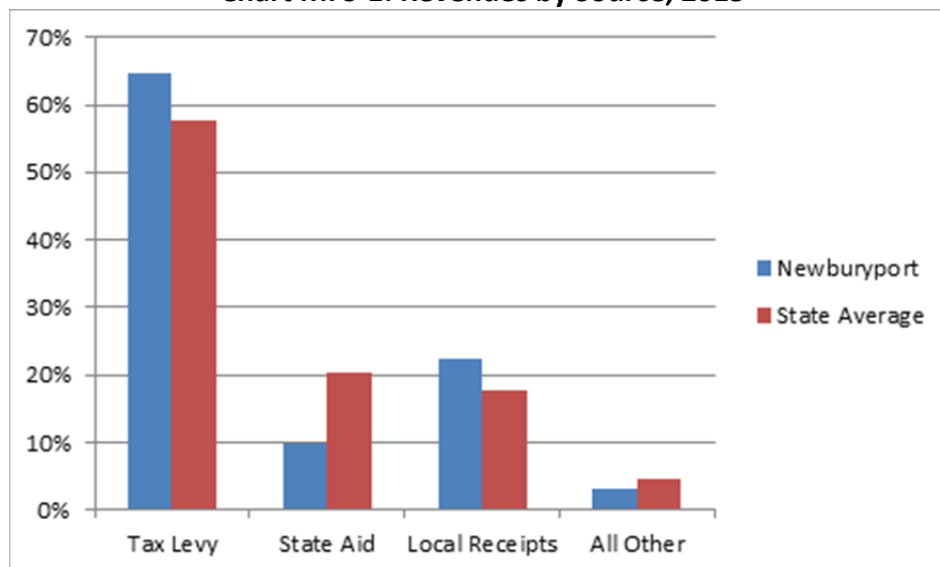
The Newburyport School Department is overseen by the School Committee, which consists of the Mayor as Chair and an elected board containing six members serving four-year terms. The School Committee oversees the broader, policy-level questions and decisions regarding the public school system while the School Department, with its Superintendent, principals and other administrative staff, oversee the daily management of the department, its staff and the students. For detailed information regarding the Newburyport Public Schools, please see **Chapter 13: Education**.

Section F: Municipal Budget, Capital Planning, and Financing

Municipal Budget

Newburyport's local government is complex with a total operating budget of \$61,693,385 in fiscal year 2017. The major sources of funding for the budget include \$52,781,080 from property tax levy, \$4,242,990 in State Aid and \$5,038,000 in local receipts. The Newburyport Public School system operates a budget of \$27,884,600, which represents approximately 45% of the City's overall budget. For more information regarding municipal finance, please see **Chapter 5: Economic Development**.

Chart MFS-1: Revenues by Source, 2015



Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Prior to the development of the CIP, individual departments maintained their own capital budgets. This practice provided an inventory of capital needs, but due to the creation of individual inventories, this process was a highly unorganized approach to capital planning. Prior to FY 2013, the City had not coordinated capital requests to the extent that the administration was able to offer an adequate long-term funding proposal to address important city-wide infrastructure improvements, replace deteriorating equipment and repair and renovate facilities. The City's new Charter requires yearly updates to the CIP.

The FY 2016-2020 CIP is a realistic funding plan that exists within the confines of the City's financial resources. In total, the estimated cost for projects over the five years is just under \$75 million. The projects are divided into five categories: facilities renovation and repair; infrastructure investment; parks, grounds and open space; vehicles/equipment; and miscellaneous. The City's lack of dedicated annual funding sources for capital improvements has made a coordinated approach to capital planning difficult. The funding philosophy behind the CIP is to continue to fund and invest in capital without drastically increasing the City's debt burden. Leveraging state and Federal funds, CPA funds and strong Free Cash and Retained Earning balances will be the continued practice to fund the CIP.

Debt Financing

Prudent use of debt financing is an important part of the City's overall fiscal planning. The primary objective of any debt management approach is to borrow at the most favorable rate possible. Attainment of this objective requires clear policies in terms of the reasons and rationale for borrowing, calculating the appropriate term for repayment and appropriately planning for the repayment of debt-financed projects at the most favorable rate possible.

The City's current credit rating is AAA from the Standard & Poor's with a Stable Outlook on the City's general obligation debt. Newburyport received this rating since it maintains a low market risk profile because it has strong legal authority to issue long-term debt to take out the notes and is a frequent issuer that regularly provides ongoing disclosure to market participants. The stable outlook reflects Standard & Poor's view of Newburyport's continued consistent financial performance and underlying economy support by strong management.

Section G: Newburyport's Municipal Facilities & Services Goals

The City seeks to provide high-quality services including police, fire, public education, parks, libraries and other public services. In this time of stressed municipal budgets, alternative funding sources and creative partnerships need to be pursued to ensure that these services continue to meet the high standards of community members. From an infrastructure standpoint, many of the utilities in Newburyport were recently upgraded and redesigned to handle future capacities.

Goal MFS-1: Maintain all municipal facilities and services and provide funding to protect their long-term value.

To function effectively, the residents need and expect well-maintained facilities. Infrastructure should be kept in good, environmentally-sound repair to assure the safety, efficiency and well-being of the community that depends on it. The City should plan, budget and act to maintain the quality and soundness of its buildings, facilities and infrastructure.

Goal MFS-2: Manage municipal facilities and services to fit the needs of residents

The community is expecting increased levels of service from the City in many ways. In order to provide better service and facilities to the residents, streamlining the management practices and also evaluating how these facilities generate revenue are two major objectives. Collaborations between the various city departments and the school department will maximize the use of all municipal facilities, including athletic fields. There is revenue to be had as municipal facilities are rented to outside groups; this revenue may be put back into facility maintenance. In addition to improving management of facilities, the City would like to expand the outreach efforts for its various cultural entities to draw in a greater segment of the population. Downtown facilities like the Firehouse Center for the Arts and the Custom House, as well as a visitor center, will benefit from good management and support and will continue to meet the cultural needs of the residents. Additionally, providing streamlined, efficient permitting processes for property owners is a priority. The City can support its volunteer board and commission members through the provision of training sessions focused on board roles and jurisdiction, educational seminars regarding current regulations and case law, and ensuring that legal and technical expertise is present and available during particularly complex project reviews. Coupled with a more efficient process that includes the solicitation of outside expertise when necessary, is the need to commit resources to the enforcement of the permitting bodies' decisions. The City has recently hired a part-time Zoning Enforcement Officer and is poised to fund a full-time Zoning Administrator whose duties will include day-to-day enforcement of the zoning ordinance and special conditions listed in the many permits issued by various City boards.

Goal MFS-3: Promote conservation of water supplies while working to maintain adequate water supply capacity to account for average and peak demand levels and public safety needs.

Water conservation measures, coupled with infrastructure and administrative improvements to increase efficiency, are the focus for this Goal. Providing safe, high quality drinking water to residents requires good planning, review of past practices and continual monitoring and adjusting of how all parts of the system are functioning, including the administrative areas. Actions that support this Goal include reviewing and implementing the recommendations presented in the City's SWAP report, exploring alternative rate structures to promote conservation; move to monthly billing cycles (versus quarterly); update and continue to implement the Water System Master Plan; and adequately fund the operation and maintenance of the new water treatment plant.

Goal MFS-4: Provide wastewater collection and treatment facilities that are adequate to serve existing and projected development and to protect the environment.

While much of the wastewater system is functioning well and can accommodate further growth, there are some weak links that must be addressed in order to improve upon current levels of service and also to allow for projected growth. As with many of the goals for this chapter, a lot of the actions focus on planning and ensuring that adequate annual operating expenses are included in the budget and deferred maintenance is addressed. Large capital expenditures are expected in the near future as the Graf Road pump station will need to be upgraded to accommodate projected residential and commercial growth in the business and industrial park as well as near the commuter rail station. The sewer system on Plum Island, based on widespread malfunctions in the winter of 2015, needs to be closely evaluated to determine what upgrades are needed to ensure that the system does not again break down. This process is on-going.

Goal MFS-5: Properly address stormwater issues in both the private and the public sectors.

In any largely built-out community, stormwater is an issue. Newburyport is no different and with new regulations coming from the Federal government, the City must plan how it will successfully implement the regulations. In addition to preparing for the new governmental regulations, the City will continue to regularly update its Stormwater Master Plan and coordinate with the Stormwater Advisory Committee to enforce the local stormwater ordinance.

Goal MFS-6: Provide a high quality of public safety services throughout the City.

Maintaining safe and secure communities is important to residents, businesses, and local government alike. These Objectives and Actions suggest ways in which Newburyport can enhance the provision of public safety services to all community members and improve communications throughout the City. There are two main objectives for this goal. The first is related to public safety and includes actions focused on streamlining emergency response, exploring the centralization of public safety dispatch services and efficiently communicating public safety information to the community. The second objective is focused on ensuring that Newburyport's public facilities are safe and accessible to disabled members of the community. The City's Commission on Disabilities is the community's advocate in all matters related to the inclusion of all persons with disabilities. The actions that support this objective include working closely with the Commission to update the ADA Transition Plan, to continue to seek input on development projects and infrastructure improvements and also to improve outreach on ADA issues.

Goal MFS-7: Continue to invest in and leverage Information Technology.

Information technology is a critical infrastructure element for the City. Assuring access to affordable and appropriate technology is now an important public service function. Leveraging the appropriate technology will vastly improve communications between the City and its residents; refining the City's website so that information is presented in a clear manner and implementing a social media policy will increase the City's communication potential. Additionally, the City needs to continue to invest in technology and provide its employees with the tools they need to work as efficiently as possible. Implementing a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) will help City workers do their jobs more effectively and will help City officials make informed funding decisions. This software will also enable residents to report and track complaints and issues in a more transparent manner.

Goal MFS-8: Continue to develop and implement City's commitment to sustainability.

Newburyport, being a Green Community, has a significant opportunity and responsibility to promote and demonstrate meaningful environmental policies and programs that help ensure a sustainable future for the community. The community's infrastructure priorities focus on issues of proper maintenance, strategic extensions, and integration of new environmentally sound technologies that reduce waste and promote efficiency. Being a coastal community, Newburyport must plan for sea level rise, increasing intense storm events and flooding. The City must prepare a Climate Change Resilience Plan to protect its residents and critical infrastructure during major storm events.