

# NEWBURYPORT COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

April 2023



CITY OF NEWBURYPORT, MA

**KARL F. SEIDMAN** | CONSULTING SERVICES  
with CivicMoxie, LLC





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To the Greater Newburyport Community,

After months of research, strategy development, and community engagement with a wide group of stakeholders, I am pleased to present the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Newburyport. This is the result of a collaborative effort with the City, our consultants, a steering committee, and the greater community that focused on creating a vision for the future of Newburyport's economy and creating a strategy for how to achieve our many goals. This plan prioritized inclusive, sustainable economic development that will maintain the city's historic character while creating local employment and business ownership opportunities for residents.

The strategies outlined in this plan will help advance the overall goal of securing economic well-being now and in the years to come, while also improving the overall quality of life of residents and community members. It aims to keep a healthy tax base that can fund the municipal services the community expects, and to strengthen our downtown and other residential and commercial centers throughout the city. We also made sure that this economic development plan considered the vital role of arts and culture in Newburyport, and looked for opportunities to grow and sustain our cultural assets.

I first want to thank the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for their financial support of this project, and for their investment in cities and towns across the Commonwealth. I also want to thank our consultant team of Karl Seidman and his associates, Susan Silberberg and Sue Kim of Civic Moxie. Their ability to listen and engage with this community impressed us just as much as their analytical and strategy development skills, and the project benefited greatly from this. Thanks also goes to our Economic Development Steering Committee, whose thoughtfulness, vision, and passion for the community helped strengthen this strategy. Finally, I am grateful to all the City staff who assisted on this project, and all community members who offered their feedback along the way.

This community is rich in history, culture, and natural beauty, and we also host a diverse and thriving economy with a highly skilled and educated workforce. We have many assets to draw upon in order to face any future challenges, which include climate change and the high cost of living in this region. The plan you are reading now presents a blueprint for building on the best elements of our community and taking actions now that will sustain our economy in the years to come.

Onward, Forward,

Sean R. Reardon  
Mayor

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This Comprehensive Economic Development Study (CEDS) was supported by the Mayor's Office of the City of Newburyport and was managed by the Mayor's Office and the Office of Planning and Development. A Steering Committee helped guide the CEDS work, and community members and organizations, businesses, and institutions were involved in planning and offered feedback during the process. Thank you to everyone who participated!

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## ***WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?***

**We are defining Economic Development as the programs, policies, and activities in a city that seek to improve local and regional economic well-being by:**

- 1. Increasing business and economic activity and assets and effectively distributing their benefits;**
- 2. Improving the community's overall quality of life; and**
- 3. Building the capacity to sustain a healthy economy and thriving community over time.**



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*Photo credit: Bob Watts*



Photo credit: Bob Watts



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# Introduction



# 1 INTRODUCTION

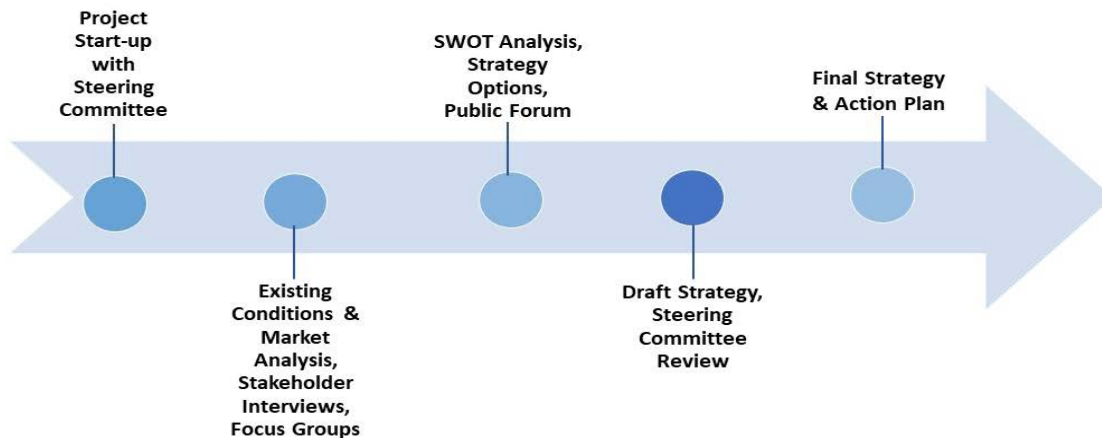
Newburyport has a diverse economy with multiple business districts that have benefited from past strategies to preserve its historic downtown, develop a business and industrial park and invest in a pedestrian-oriented waterfront, parks and other amenities. As Newburyport recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic and faces new challenges and a changing economic environment, it is formulating an economic development strategy to ensure that it is well positioned to address new challenges, fully capitalize on its assets and market opportunities, and align actions of the City government, the private sector and community organizations to advance shared priorities for the city’s future economic development.

## STRATEGY FORMULATION PROCESS

Newburyport’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was prepared over a six-month period from October 2022 through March 2023 under the direction of the Mayor’s Office and an Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee, working with the consultant team of Karl F. Seidman Consulting Services and CivicMoxie, LLC. The process, summarized in **Figure 1-1**, incorporated information, analysis and input from a variety of sources to formulate the strategy and implementation action plan including:

- A review of existing reports, plans, and studies by the City of Newburyport and other sources;
- An existing conditions analysis of the city and regional economy and labor force, local housing, transportation and real estate conditions, the city’s arts, cultural and historic resources and the local and regional “ecosystem” of organizations supporting economic development;
- Individual interviews with local businesses, property owners, arts, cultural and historic organizations, community leaders, the real estate community, and government officials;
- Five focus groups related to specific sectors: arts, culture and history; manufacturing; real estate; small businesses; and tourism;
- Input from a public forum held on January 11, 2023; and
- Input from three meetings with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee.

**Figure 1-1. Overview of Strategy Formulation Process**



## ORGANIZATION OF STRATEGY REPORT

This report summarizes the results from the analysis and community input phases of the planning process and presents the goals, strategies and implementation action plan and timeline for the Newburyport Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This report is organized into five sections:

### 01 | Introduction

An introduction outlining the planning process and describing the sections of the report.

### 02 | Existing Conditions Analysis

An analysis of Newburyport's key economic development-related assets is presented, including its economic/business base, labor force, real estate, arts/culture/historic resources, housing and transportation. This section also summarizes the local and regional "ecosystem" of organizations supporting economic development and the arts/culture/historic sector.

### 03 | SWOT Analysis

A Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of Newburyport is presented drawing on the existing conditions analysis, steering committee discussions, stakeholder interviews and focus groups. The results of the SWOT analysis are used to identify key opportunities, challenges and priorities that inform the overall strategy.

### 04 | Economic Development Strategy

The economic development strategy is detailed with an overall vision and goals, seven strategies to advance these goals and a proposed approach and organizational structure for implementation. The strategy is informed by the SWOT analysis, community input from interviews, focus groups and a public forum, guidance from the CEDS Steering Committee and the consultant team's knowledge of regional resources and best practices. For each strategy, its rationale and specific projects and activities to implement the strategy are discussed.

### 05 | Implementation Action Plan

An implementation action plan is provided that addresses phasing key tasks, identifies key partners and potential funding needs.







# 2

## Existing Conditions Analysis



## section 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

This section summarizes information and findings from an analysis of Newburyport's existing conditions related to economic development. It is organized in seven parts:

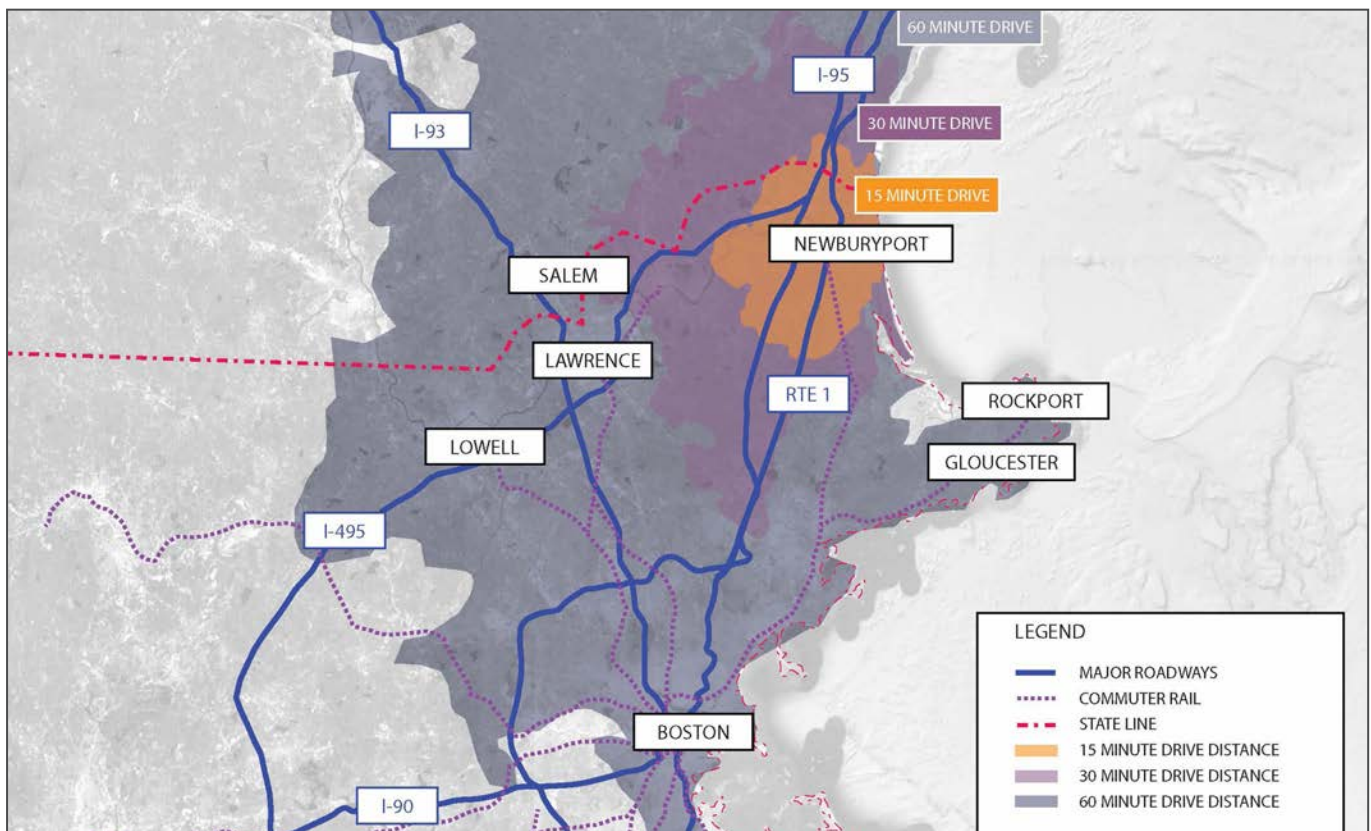
1. Newburyport's context within the region;
2. Newburyport's economic base & key industry clusters;
3. Real estate supply and conditions for future economic development;
4. A profile of the city's resident labor force and household economic conditions;
5. A summary of the city's arts, cultural, historic & natural resources;
6. Housing and transportation conditions; and
7. An overview of the local and regional ecosystem of organizations related to economic development, including key partners and system gaps.

This analysis highlights Newburyport's important strengths and assets to build upon in its economic development strategy along with key challenges and problems that help to inform economic development goals and priorities.

### NEWBURYPORT CONTEXT

Newburyport is located at the northern part of the Boston metropolitan area which provides access to a large pool of households and workers in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire that live within a 30-to-60 minute drive (**Figure 2-1**). Newburyport's economy and outlook are closely linked to the larger Boston metropolitan area and Lower Merrimack Valley sub-region—these regions supply workers for Newburyport businesses; provide customers for the city's shops, restaurants and arts, cultural and historic destinations; and generate employment for many Newburyport residents. The city's location also provides good highway connections to these regions (and beyond) with its proximity to three important roadways—Interstate 95, Interstate 495 and

Figure 2-1. Map of Newburyport and North of Boston Region



Source: CivicMoxie, LLC

Route 1. Its river and ocean waterfront location are highly valued amenities and economic resources but also heighten risks from sea level rise and flooding with the growing impacts from climate change.

Newburyport also faces competition for businesses, residents, visitors and workers within the region, as there are many competing economic centers and tourism destinations within a 45-to 60-minute drive. This economic development strategy will help strengthen Newburyport’s position within the region and ensure it remains an attractive and desirable place to live, work, play and grow a business.

## NEWBURYPORT ECONOMIC BASE

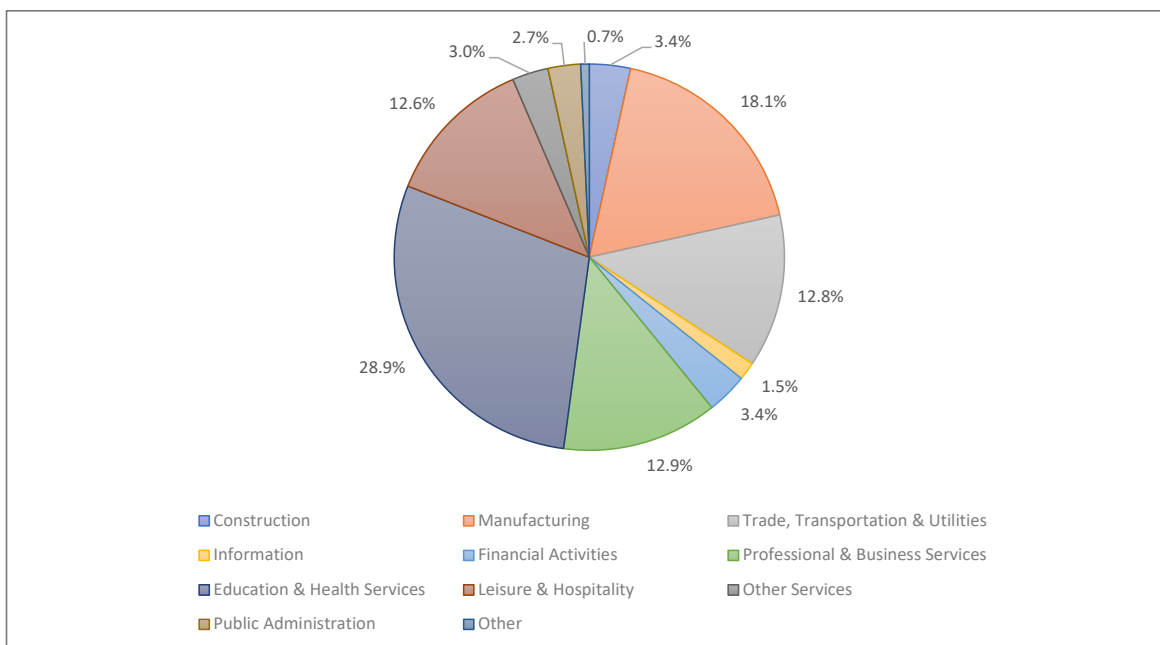
Newburyport has a diverse economic base that experienced good job growth from 2012 to 2021, exceeding that of the Merrimack Valley and Boston regions, including a stronger post-pandemic recovery. Newburyport had 990 establishments located within the city with average monthly total employment of 11,947 in 2021.<sup>1</sup> As shown in **Figure 2-2**, Newburyport’s economic base is well diversified with five sectors, each of which accounted for over 12% of total jobs in 2021.

Within these five sectors, Health & Education Services and Manufacturing are the largest, supplying 29% and 18% of 2021 jobs, respectively.

However, due to different wage levels, the sectors that provide the highest share of payroll vary from those with the highest share of jobs. **Table 2-1** compares each sector’s share of total jobs in 2021 with its percentage of total payroll. Three sectors, Health & Education Services, Manufacturing, and Professional & Business Services accounted for 69% of 2021 total payroll. For Manufacturing and Professional & Business Services (along with Construction, Information and Financial Activities), the share of payroll exceeded their share of jobs—indicating that their jobs offer relatively high average pay. Leisure & Hospitality and Trade, Transportation and Utilities, on the other hand, are low-paying sectors -- with their share of payroll less than half their share of jobs.

Small businesses dominate Newburyport’s economy. Half of all enterprises employ five or fewer workers, and 84% have less than 20 employees (**Figure 2-3**). Construction and Professional/Scientific/Technical Services have the highest share of very small businesses -- two-thirds of their firms have under 5 workers. Most businesses in the Retail and Arts/Recreation/Entertainment sectors are also small, as 90% have under 20 workers. Accommodation & Food Services, Manufacturing and Health Care & Social Assistance are sectors with lower shares of very small businesses and a large percentage of firms with 20 or more workers.

**Figure 2-2. Newburyport Employment by Sector, 2021**



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

A comparison of Newburyport’s economic base with that of the Merrimack Valley and Boston regions helps to identify economic strengths and specializations for Newburyport, along with sectors in which it is under-represented. **Figure 2-4** compares Newburyport’s share of total jobs by sector to that of the Merrimack Valley (Merrimack WDA) and the Boston (Boston-Newton-Nashua NECTA) regions. This comparison highlights three points:

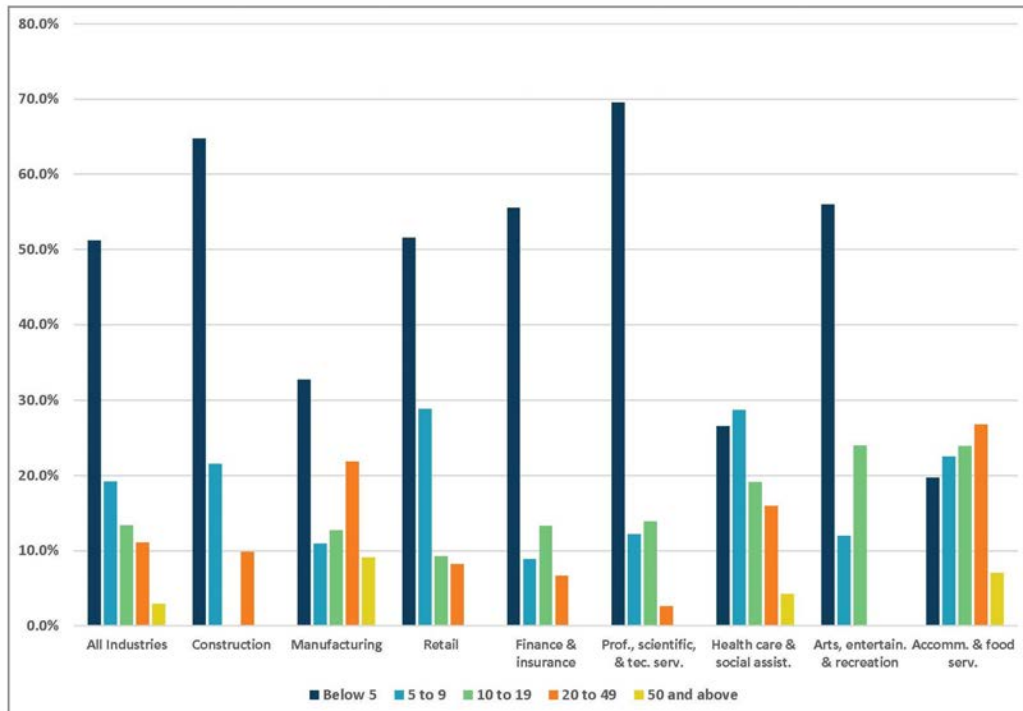
1. Newburyport jobs are more concentrated in Manufacturing and Leisure & Hospitality than both regions;
2. Newburyport is under-represented versus both regions in Construction, Trade/Transportation/Utilities and Professional & Business Services; and
3. The Health and Education sector has a comparable share of jobs in all three regions.

**Table 2-1. Newburyport Employment and Payroll by Sector, 2021**

Sector	Percent of Total Employment	Percent of Total Payroll
Construction	3.4%	4.0%
Manufacturing	18.1%	19.8%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	12.8%	8.6%
Information	1.5%	2.4%
Financial Activities	3.4%	5.3%
Professional & Business Services	12.9%	26.0%
Education & Health Services	28.9%	23.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	12.6%	5.1%
Other Services	3.0%	2.1%
Public Administration	2.7%	2.7%
Other	0.7%	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

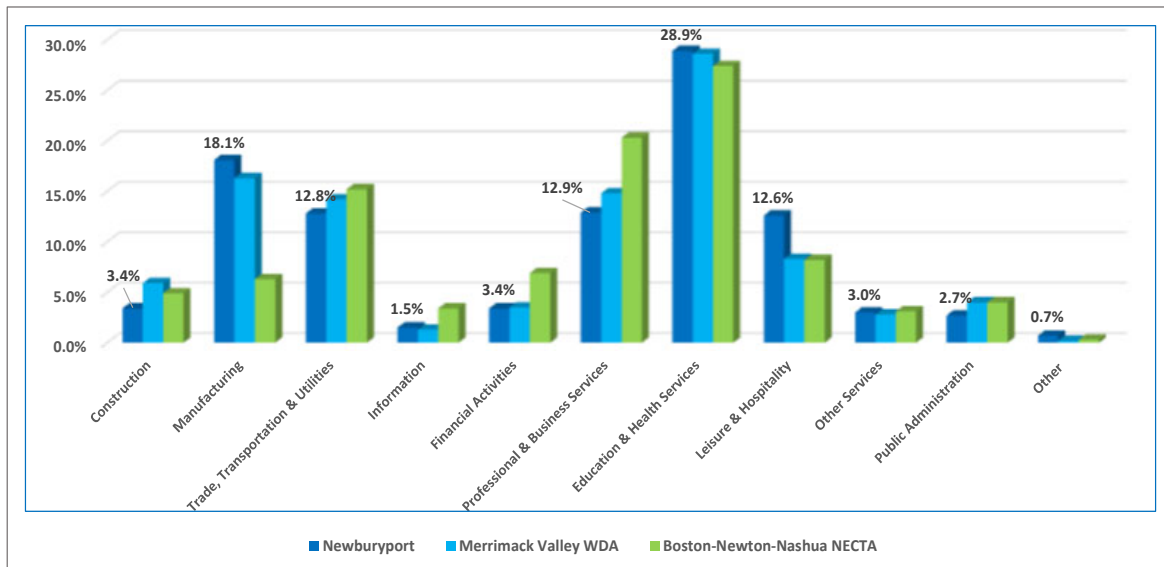
**Figure 2-3. Newburyport Businesses by Size, Selected Industries, 2020**



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)



Figure 2-4. 2021 Employment by Sector, Newburyport and Region



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

**Table 2-2** uses Location Quotients (LQs) to identify industries in which Newburyport is specialized, showing industries in which Newburyport has a LQ>1. LQ measures the relative concentration of an industry or sector between two regions, i.e., it divides Newburyport’s percentage of jobs in a sector with that for the comparison region. LQ>1 is an indicator of specialization or advantage, especially if it is much higher than 1. This data indicates that Newburyport has regional specializations in three sectors with a sizeable job base:

1. Manufacturing with LQs of 1.11 and 2.88 compared to the Merrimack Valley and Boston regions, respectively, with the specialization greatest in non-durable goods;
2. Health Care & Social Assistance with LQs of 1.27 and 1.36 versus the Merrimack Valley and Boston regions, respectively; and
3. Restaurants with LQs of 1.71 and 1.95 compared to Merrimack Valley and Boston regions, respectively.

Newburyport’s LQ for Management of Companies (i.e., corporate headquarters) is also high, over 1.3, but there are few of these establishments in Newburyport, accounting for 379 jobs in 2021.

## EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE

Newburyport’s economy performed well during the past decade with its rate of overall job growth from 2012 to 2021 (11.6%) exceeding that for the

Merrimack Valley region and Boston NECTA (**Table 2-3**). The job growth rate in five of nine sectors over this period was higher in Newburyport than the two comparison regions and above the Boston NECTA in two others. Key trends include:

- Newburyport manufacturing jobs grew by 3.4% compared to declines of 5.3% and 8.5% for the Merrimack Valley and Boston regions, respectively;
- Leisure & Hospitality employment increased 17.6% in Newburyport while declining by 3% in the Merrimack Valley WDA and 10.1% in the Boston NECTA;
- For the Financial and Professional & Business Services sectors, Newburyport had job growth close to 30% while employment was stable for the two comparison regions; and
- Newburyport experienced a large decline (19.6%) in the Trade/Transportation/Utilities sector while job growth for this sector in the Merrimack Valley was 9.6%. Two factors contributed to this decline—a loss of over 300 wholesale jobs between 2012 and 2015 and a post-pandemic drop of 85 retail jobs from 2019 to 2021.

Post-pandemic economic recovery in Newburyport has been strong, significantly outpacing the Merrimack Valley WDA and Boston NECTA. **Table 2-4** compares average monthly employment in 2019 with that of 2021 for Newburyport, the Merrimack Valley WDA and Boston Metropolitan NECTA. Newburyport reached 98.6% of its 2019 employment

**Table 2-2. High Location Quotient Sectors for Newburyport**

Economic Sector/Sub-sector	LQ vs. MV WDA	LQ vs. Boston Metro NECTA	NBPT 2021 Avg. Monthly Jobs	NBPT Avg. Weekly Wage
Manufacturing	1.11	2.88	2,159	\$1,667
Non-Durable Goods	1.73	4.73	1,161	\$1,588
Management of Companies	1.39	1.33	379	\$4,091
Education & Health Services	1.01	1.05	3,448	\$1,170
Health Care & Social Assistance	1.27	1.38	2,918	\$1,163
Leisure & Hospitality	1.01	1.05	1,504	\$577
Accommodation & Food Services	1.56	1.62	1,309	\$543
Restaurants	1.71	1.95	1,286	\$542

Source: Karl F. Seidman Consulting Services

**Table 2-3. Percentage Job Growth for Newburyport, Merrimack Valley Region and Boston Region, 2012-2021**

Sector	Newburyport	Merrimack Valley WDA	Boston-Cambridge- Nashua MA-NH Metropolitan NECTA
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	11.6%	5.9%	7.2%
Construction	54.7%	60.9%	42.4%
Manufacturing	3.4%	-5.3%	-8.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	-16.2%	9.6%	-1.4%
Information	6.0%	-27.1%	7.8%
Financial Activities	29.0%	2.6%	3.2%
Professional & Business Services	27.7%	-0.2%	23.6%
Education & Health Services	19.8%	20.3%	13.0%
Leisure & Hospitality	17.6%	-3.0%	-10.1%
Other Services	-4.0%	-31.1%	-18.9%
Public Administration	5.5%	2.8%	2.5%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

**Table 2-4. 2021 Average Monthly Employment as Percentage of 2019: Newburyport, Merrimack Valley Region & Boston Region**

Sector	Newburyport	Merrimack Valley WDA	Boston-Cambridge- Nashua MA-NH Metropolitan NECTA
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>98.6%</b>	<b>96.3%</b>	<b>94.7%</b>
Construction	88.7%	102.0%	100.0%
Manufacturing	95.8%	96.0%	95.1%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	93.7%	98.8%	93.5%
Information	118.1%	97.4%	99.2%
Financial Activities	113.4%	95.6%	96.7%
Professional & Business Services	104.3%	100.9%	99.3%
Education & Health Services	100.3%	96.2%	97.2%
Leisure & Hospitality	94.7%	86.4%	75.6%
Other Services	87.1%	83.5%	86.5%
Public Administration	95.6%	99.6%	100.8%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

level in 2021, higher than levels for the MVWDA (96.3%) and Boston NECTA (94.7%). Furthermore, Newburyport not only recovered but grew beyond its 2019 level of employment in four sectors: Business & Professional Services, Education & Health Services, Financial Activities and Information.

The analysis in **Table 2-4** on the previous page highlights four key economic clusters in Newburyport based on the cluster's size and share of the city's job base and competitive strength in the region, based on the cluster's assets, relative growth rates and location quotient:

- Tourism with 100 firms and 1,504 jobs in 2021. This cluster includes restaurants, lodging, and arts/entertainment/recreation businesses, and reflects Newburyport's many natural, cultural, recreational attractions;
- Health care with 89 firms and 2,583 jobs in 2021. This cluster includes Anna Jacques Hospital, nursing & residential care facilities, and medical offices, and reflects the city's position as a regional health care center;
- Manufacturing with 68 firms and 2,159 jobs in 2021, and includes specializations in printing, metal fabrication, and computer & electronic equipment; and
- Food with over 90 firms and 2,200 jobs in 2021. This cluster includes restaurants, food stores, breweries, and food manufacturing, and overlaps with the tourism cluster.

## REAL ESTATE CONDITIONS AND POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Newburyport's commercial and industrial real estate market is tight with limited vacant space and increasing rents. According to CoStar data provided by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, Newburyport's commercial vacancy rate was 2.8% in 2022 and was consistently below 5% over the past decade. Similarly, LoopNet listed four office and retail properties with 62,000 square feet (SF) of space for lease in December 2022, with the former K-Mart store on Storey Avenue accounting for 87% of this space. For industrial space, CoStar reports 159,000 SF of industrial space available for lease in December 2022 (7.7% of total space) with one building at 122 Parker Street accounting for 84% of the available space. LoopNet lists 77,741 SF of industrial space for lease in three Newburyport buildings that do not include the Parker Street property. One Newburyport

building also offers co-working space with 20 spaces of 100 SF available in December 2002.

The high cost of retail, office and industrial space was a common concern raised in stakeholder interviews, with several people reporting that some businesses have left Newburyport due to high real estate costs and the availability of lower cost space in other communities. Arts and cultural organizations and artists are particularly hard hit by high rents, as they often can only afford to pay a lower below-market rent. A limited supply of small professional offices was also noted by several stakeholders. Finally, there was a common concern that the absence of a hotel in Newburyport hurts the city's ability to attract tourists and to host and gain the economic benefits of small conferences and events, including weddings.

The strong market conditions have helped the city's economic growth over the past decade, as well as the success of past economic development efforts, including the preservation of the historic downtown, investments in the waterfront and pedestrian environment and development of the business and industrial park. However, rising rents make it more difficult for Newburyport to sustain the character and diversity of its downtown as it becomes more challenging for small independent businesses and arts and cultural enterprises to afford the rents needed to remain in or near downtown.

Newburyport is largely developed, with limited land available for future economic development. Consequently, its ability to address future real estate needs will depend on better utilization of its existing land resources through redevelopment and infill development. Fortunately, there are a number of sites and districts across the city that provide opportunities for Newburyport to support new development that can address a range of real estate needs related to economic development:

- Waterfront West site: potential for housing, a hotel, commercial space;
- Storey Avenue, including Port Plaza: potential for mixed-use infill and redevelopment with housing and retail and/or office space;
- 40R District: potential for infill and redevelopment with housing and mixed-use housing with retail/office space;
- Business and industrial park: potential for infill and building expansions for industrial and commercial uses; and
- Mersen and 122 Parker Street vacant space – new industrial or office tenants.

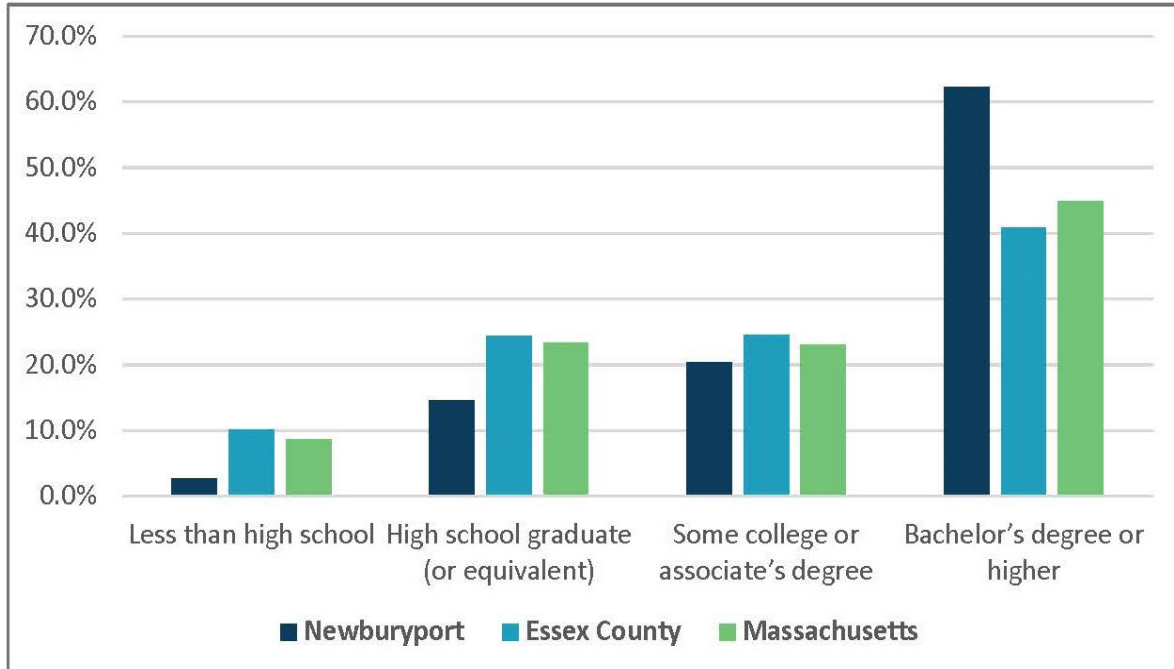


## NEWBURYPORT LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMIC WELL BEING

Newburyport's resident labor force is well-educated and largely employed in high-skill occupations but has barely grown over the past decade. Over 62% of Newburyport adults 25 years or older have a bachelor's degree or higher, above 41% for

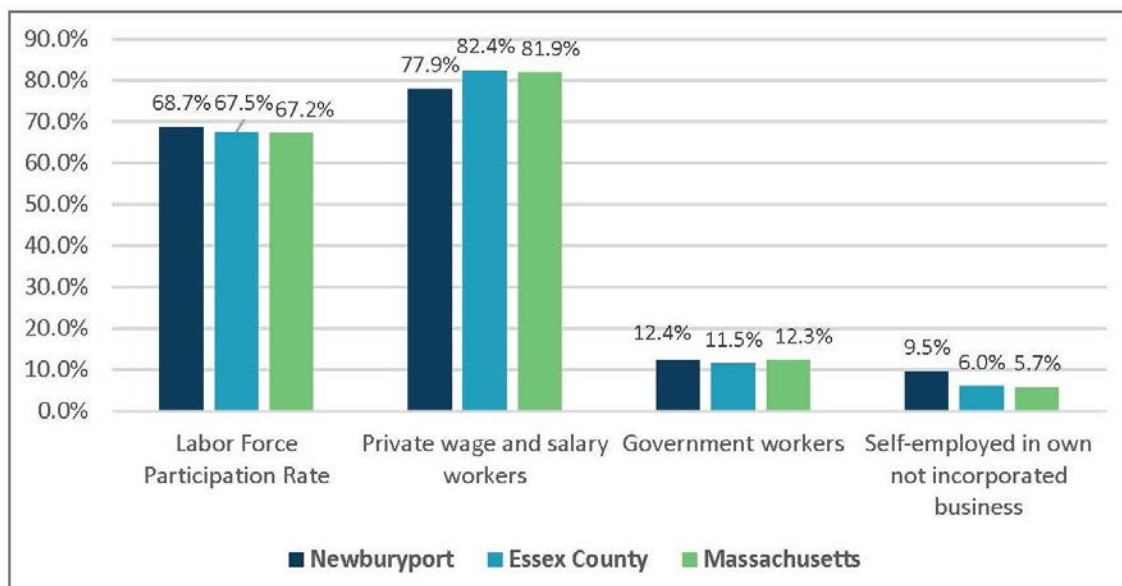
Essex County and 45% statewide (**Figure 2-5**). Furthermore, 62% of employed Newburyport residents work in higher-paying Management, Business, Science, & Arts occupations, compared to 44% for Essex County workers and the 48% share for Massachusetts workers. Newburyport also has a higher labor force participation rate<sup>2</sup> and a larger share of self-employed workers than Essex County and Massachusetts (**Figure 2-6**).

**Figure 2-5. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older, Newburyport, Essex County and Massachusetts**



Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020

**Figure 2-6. Labor Force Status, 2020 Newburyport, Essex County and Massachusetts**



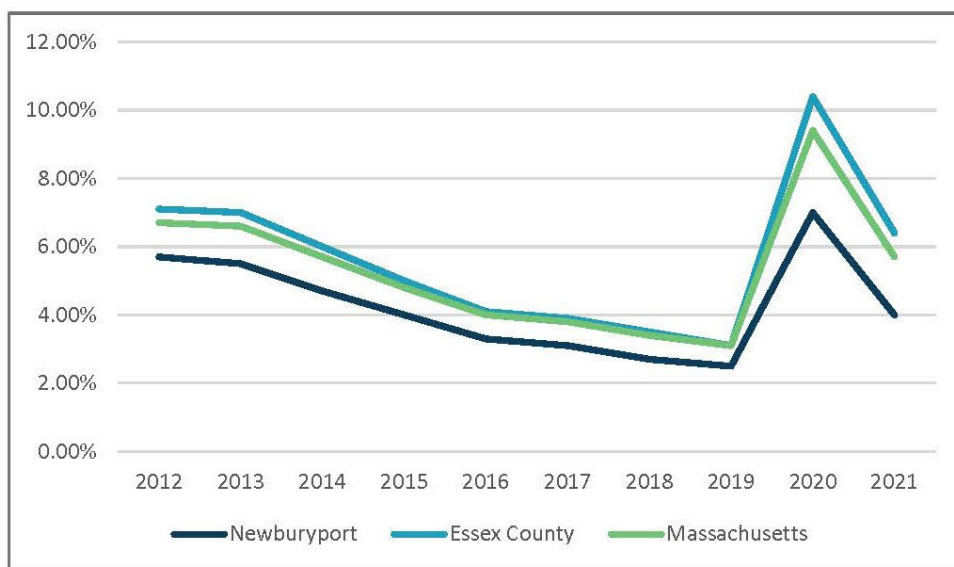
Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020

Despite its many positive characteristics, Newburyport’s civilian labor force grew by only 155, or 1.6% from 2010-2020, compared to 9.8% growth for Essex County and 7.9% for Massachusetts. The minimal labor force growth reflects the city’s loss of 2,314 residents age 20 to 64, between 2010 and 2020. The decline in resident labor force, its high-skill professional composition and the size and staffing needs of Newburyport firms combine to make local employers highly dependent on the regional labor force. Newburyport’s large job base in manufacturing, health care and restaurants creates a mismatch between the skills and occupations demanded by the city’s employers and those supplied by Newburyport’s resident labor force. Moreover, Newburyport has a ratio of 1.18 jobs for every resident worker and, thus, must attract many workers who live outside the city.

Newburyport’s labor force and households have fared well in the regional economy with their unemployment and poverty rates below county and state levels, and relatively high household incomes. These outcomes reflect the city’s highly educated

and skilled workforce and its connection to job opportunities in the metropolitan Boston labor market. The unemployment rate for Newburyport’s labor force was 4% in 2021 compared to 6.4% in Essex County and 5.6% for Massachusetts. As shown in **Figure 2-7**, unemployment rates for Newburyport were consistently lower than the county and state rates from 2012 through 2022. Similarly, the poverty rate for Newburyport residents in 2020<sup>3</sup> was 5.5%, almost half the rate for Essex County (10.1%) and Massachusetts (9.8%). Poverty rates were low for most age groups and households in the city with the exception of female-headed households, which had a 17% poverty rate, close to the 21% county and state rates. Median household income in Newburyport was \$110,740—one-third above that for Essex County (\$82,225) and Massachusetts (\$84,385) but below the average for all Merrimack Valley communities (\$119,000). Newburyport also experienced a higher increase in median household income (45%) from 2010 to 2020 than the 28% growth for Essex County and 31% rise for Massachusetts.

**Figure 2-7. Average Monthly Unemployment Rates, 2012 - 2021**  
Newburyport, Essex County and Massachusetts



Source: Massachusetts Department of Economic Research

## ARTS, CULTURAL, HISTORIC & NATURAL RESOURCES

Newburyport has strong assets in historic and natural resources and a large arts and cultural community of for-profit and nonprofit businesses and individual practitioners. The mostly intact historic downtown is unusual for its size and completeness and taken within the overall historic context of the surrounding residential areas, represents a unique destination. The arts and cultural community consists of several major institutional destinations, as well as smaller galleries, shops, and historic trails. Natural and recreational resources abound and include beaches and ocean destinations, natural areas, river resources, and parks and trails.

While there are robust assets and resources, the lack of coordination and marketing between sectors makes it difficult to find these resources and navigate available experiences and businesses. There are multiple labels for distinct areas in the city (historic districts, cultural district, trails) with no single map or descriptive system, and no single entity exists for coordinating, marketing, funding, and advocating.

Anecdotal examples indicate that there has been some loss of arts and cultural resources because of the high cost of space and the very low vacancy rate of commercial and other spaces suitable for arts, cultural, and gathering uses in the city. In addition, climate change/sea level rise poses a threat to both natural resources and tourist destinations such as Plum Island and the Park River National Wildlife Refuge as well as the downtown waterfront which hosts historic and arts/cultural sites and provides a gathering spot for events.

## ARTS & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Arts and cultural resources are scattered mostly throughout the downtown. There is one performing arts theater (191 seats), an art house cinema, and scattered galleries and creative businesses. Public art exists along the Clipper City Rail Trail and in other locations in the form of murals and sculptures. The following sections provide more details on arts and cultural resources in the city.

### The Newburyport Cultural District

The Newburyport Cultural District was created in 2013 with the intention of pursuing the goals of “attracting artists and cultural enterprises, encouraging business and job development, establishing tourist destinations, preserving and reusing historic buildings, enhancing property values and fostering local cultural development.”<sup>4</sup> As part of its efforts to “attract tourists and entrepreneurs, which in turn help communities foster their cultural sector and expand their tax base,” the Massachusetts Cultural Council allows cities with the district designation to apply for grants to support marketing, fund operational support for management, pay for artist or vendor fees, implement creative placemaking/ placekeeping activities, and develop collaborative cultural policies, among other things.

The Cultural District, shown on the map in **Figure 2-8**, encompasses much of downtown and this map has not been updated recently. There is no signage marking the district, and the map is located only on the City of Newburyport website, not on downtown promotion or marketing sites or in marketing materials.<sup>5</sup>





Figure 2-8. Newburyport Cultural District



Source: City of Newburyport, <https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/office-of-arts-tourism-and-cultural-affairs>



## Public Art and Trails

This section contains information on public art and local/city trails. Regional and nature trails are described in the “Regional and Local Nature Trails and Networks” section.

Public art in the form of murals, sculptures and plaques can be found throughout the city with a good concentration of art in the downtown and along the waterfront. There is no formal map with information on art locations, artists, and possible walking routes. In addition to these scattered works, the Clipper City Rail Trail & Harborwalk (a 1.1-mile multi-use path connecting the MBTA commuter rail station with the waterfront at the Route 1 bridge over the Merrimack for a total path length of 3.9 miles – **Figure 2-9**) hosts a number of public art works and offers superb views of the waterfront.

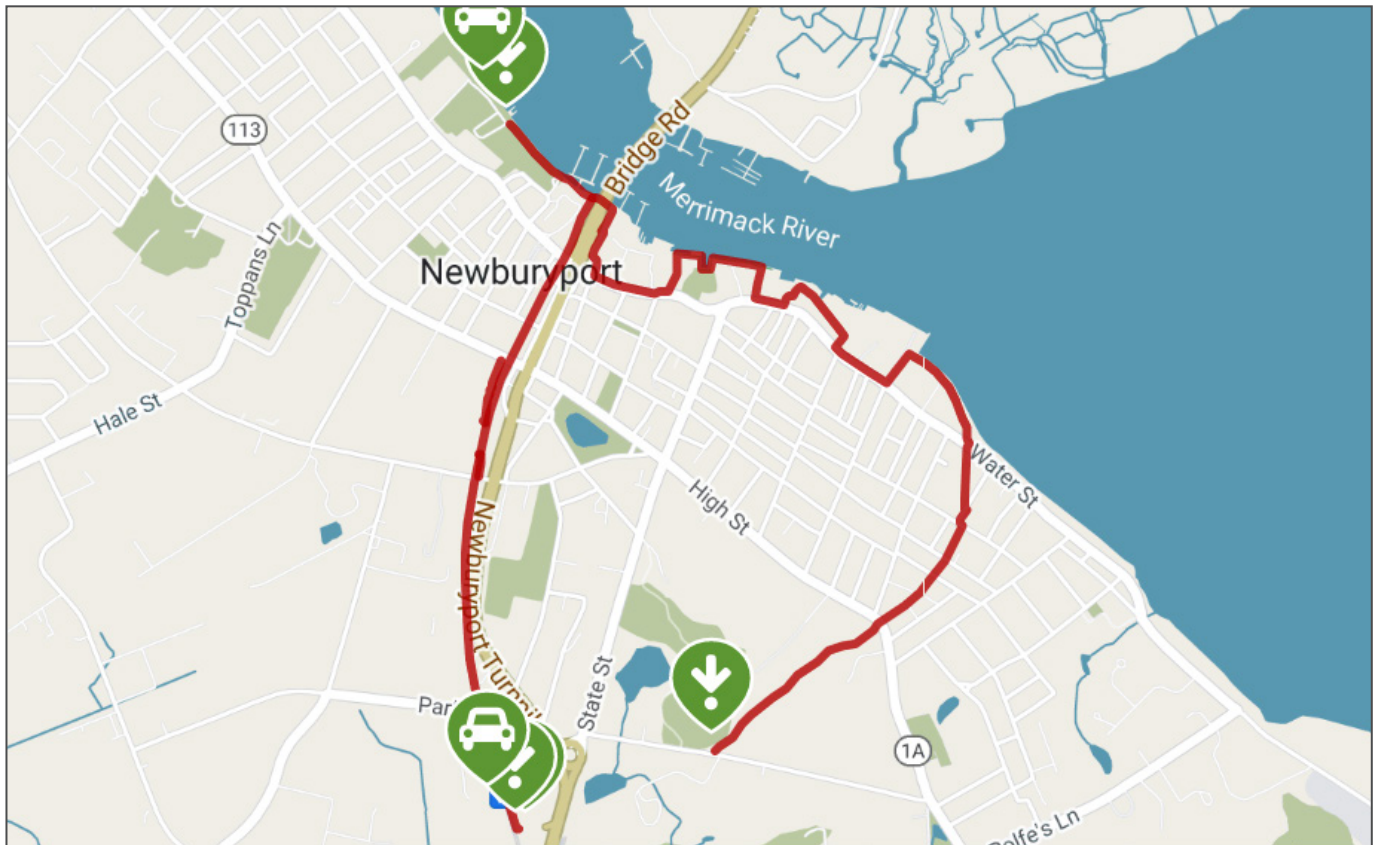
“The Clipper City Rail Trail is part of the Coastal Trails Coalition, which is developing in the four towns of Amesbury, Newbury, Newburyport, and Salisbury along the Merrimack River and will eventually be a link in the 28-mile Border to Boston Trail. When complete, the Clipper City Rail Trail will be a full loop.”<sup>6</sup>

The Clipper City Rail Trail has been highlighted in Rails to Trails magazine in Winter of 2013, and



American Trails in the Summer of 2011 (**Figure 2-10**). While photos of the public art on the trail can be found in these magazine articles, the only collection of online images is on the City of Newburyport Planning and Development web page.<sup>7</sup> The map of the Newburyport Cultural District (**Figure 2-8**) has a public art category but no public art is shown on the map or in the map’s key listing.

**Figure 2-9. Clipper City Rail Trail & Harborwalk**



Source: <https://www.trailink.com/trail/clipper-city-rail-trail--harborwalk/>

Figure 2-10. American Trails Article on the Clipper City Rail Trail

The trail provides scenic access along Newburyport's harbor where the bronze sculptural bench by artist Michael Allano is a popular stop

**FEATURED TRAIL**  
**Clipper City Rail Trail, Newburyport, MA**  
**A trail becomes a community centerpiece**

City officials in Newburyport began with the vision that a trail can be a linear park that enhances the community's quality of life. There is a growing recognition that significant economic activity can be generated by the arts, and the Clipper City Rail Trail provided an opportunity to showcase public art in a big way.

The 1.1-mile trail runs from a commuter rail station to the shoreline of the Merrimack River near downtown Newburyport. In a relatively short distance, the trail corridor cuts through hills and connects with the harbor, passing through a variety of environments from the industrial park to a densely developed neighborhood and the waterfront.

Several years ago, Georgie Vining, the City's Senior Project Manager, traveled to Paris for a family vacation and was inspired by the sculpture along the banks of the Seine River. The City raised over \$160,000 from contributions by individuals, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, community yard sales, charitable foundations, and other grants to support the Rail Trail Enhancement Project and finish the trail.

Today, the Clipper City Rail Trail has a variety of figurative, abstract, and interactive sculptures, a mural along a highway underpass, custom signage, garden installations by the local "Green Artists League" and other volunteers, and a boardwalk, pedestrian bridge, and other functional elements designed to be aesthetically pleasing.

Read more about the Clipper City Rail Trail and a wide variety of projects along trails and greenways at [www.americantrails.org/resources/art](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/art).

Children interact with "Clyde," a horse sculpture made of wood and steel by artist Jamie Burnes (photo by Jay Havighurst)

34 SUMMER 2011 American Trails

www.AmericanTrails.org 35

Source: American Trails, Summer 2011.

There are also a number of historic statues in the city, including:

- The Volunteer (Civil War Monument) and Obelisk honoring soldiers of all wars, Atkinson Common;
- William Lloyd Garrison, Brown Square (across from City Hall);
- George Washington (intersection of High, State, and Pond Streets);
- Bartlet Mall stone monument and plaque; and
- Other plaques throughout the city commemorating special places, people, and events.

**Performing Arts, Organizations, Galleries, Creative Businesses**

**The Newburyport Local Cultural Council**

Newburyport's Local Cultural Council is a ten-member volunteer board whose members are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council, and who serve three-year terms. The Cultural Council's mission is to distribute

Massachusetts Cultural Council funding through grants to local creatives, organizations, and initiatives. The Council conducts an open and transparent process for discussing and voting on all submitted applications and grant applicants, and recipients must be listed on the City of Newburyport website.

Of the 34 applications received for Fiscal Year 2022 grants, the Cultural Council awarded 21 applicants an average grant of \$433 with the smallest grant being \$200 and the largest \$1000. Eighteen of the grantees were nonprofits or applicants on behalf of nonprofit initiatives or events, three grantees were individuals, and one grant was awarded to a public entity.

In May of 2022, the Cultural Council sponsored a one-day cultural forum in the city with the purpose of gathering arts, cultural, and historical organizations, advocates and individual creatives to discuss needs, opportunities, and future goals. Outcomes and goals related to this report include:

- Advocate and focus on cultural tourism to enrich lifestyle and increase revenue for our City, businesses and community;



- Commitment to broadening the arts & access to the arts;
- Foster collaboration with sister cities on the Northshore to promote cultural tourism; and
- Innovate technology to achieve our goals, utilizing AI tools to assist with labor shortages and increase reach in our community.

### ***The Firehouse Center for the Arts***

The Firehouse is a nonprofit center with a 191-seat theater on the downtown waterfront that is active throughout the year with Firehouse-produced events, partner presentations, and arts education programs. The Center’s educational programs are rooted in the belief that talent exists at every age and in people from every background, regardless of experience. These programs include February Teen Intensive, Second Act Readers’ Theatre, and Glee Club. The Firehouse Center collaborates with other organizations throughout the year, including the Actors Studio of Newburyport (which has relocated to Amesbury), to present shows and performances.



### ***Newburyport Arts (Newburyport Arts Association)***

Founded in 1948, Newburyport Arts is dedicated to promoting and exhibiting the work of its approximately 600 members, providing art education for students of all ages and skills, and keeping the visual arts accessible for students in local schools and for special needs adults. Newburyport Arts owns and has operations in 65 Water Street, a late 18th century former mercantile building along the waterfront. The nonprofit

operates three interior galleries, an outdoor sculpture garden, and an exhibition/education space adjacent to the Clipper City Rail Trail.

### ***Newburyport Arts Collective***

Formed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Collective is a group of artists, organizations, and arts advocates who have joined forces to preserve and expand their arts and cultural offerings through advocacy, integrated promotion, and a free-flowing exchange of ideas, knowledge, and resources. The group’s mission is “to advocate for, engage, and elevate the nonprofit arts, culture organizations and individual artists in the greater Newburyport area.”



*Photo credit: Bob Watts*

### ***Galleries***

There are several galleries in the city, mostly located downtown, that include:

- Indigo (one artist);
- Minutia Gallery (in the Tannery);
- Valerie’s Gallery;
- Paula Estey Gallery;
- Blochaus (moved from Lawrence to the Tannery); and
- A Pleasant Shoppe.

There is anecdotal evidence that higher rents and shifts in the market during the pandemic have caused recent closings or a move to online only operations for several galleries, including:

- Connor Summers (closed);
- Lepore (closed);
- Sweethaven Gallery (now online only); and
- Walsingham (now online only).

**Creative Clusters**

The Tannery Marketplace is located just outside the downtown core, on Water Street, and has a collection of uses that includes a robust cluster of “Creativity and Learning” tenants. This cluster includes:

- Mintz Photo Studio/SEE Shore Photography;
- Nettie & Ro Creative Studio;
- The Artists Playground Studio space for artists, dance, yoga, acting and music;
- The Dance Place;
- Zach Field Drums & Music;
- The Screening Room (small art house local movie theater); and
- Blochaus Art Gallery.

In addition, the Tannery hosts many food and dining offerings, a bookstore, and the Sunday Newburyport Farmers’ Market in the summer.

**Events**

There are many events in Newburyport throughout the year. Some are organized by for-profit businesses and others by nonprofits with City support. Below is a list of events organized by season.

**Summer**

- Riverfront Music Festival
- Yankee Homecoming
- Greek Festival
- The Chamber Music Festival
- Kitchen Tour
- Newburyport Chamber Music Festival
- Waterfront Movie Series
- Classic Car Show

**Autumn**

- Annual Lantern Festival
- Fall Harvest Festival
- Oktoberfest and Riverfront Festival
- Documentary Film Festival (and year-round programming)
- Downtown Trick-or-Treat
- Friends of the Library’s Great Old Book Sale – Autumn Sale
- Witches Night Out
- Pumpkin Lighting

**Winter**

- Winter Carnival
- Merrimack River Eagle Festival
- Santa Parade and Tree Lighting
- Holiday Invitation Nights
- Custom House Maritime Museum Holiday House Tours

**Spring**

- Chamber of Commerce’s Spring Fest Field of Honor
- New Works Festival
- Earth Port Film Festival (temporarily closed)
- Newburyport Preservation Week
- Friends of the Library’s Great Old Book Sale – Spring Sale
- The Literary Festival
- Historical Society Garden Tour

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Newburyport's historic resources are extensive. The city's mostly intact downtown and surrounding historic residential fabric, coupled with its waterfront location, combine to make the city a quintessential New England community. The historic character is perhaps its strongest defining feature and the various historic elements, in both organizations, destinations, and narratives, are outlined here.

### Organizations

#### *Newburyport Preservation Trust*

The Trust is a "nonprofit membership organization that brings together people from Newburyport and beyond who value the preservation of the city's period architecture, neighborhood ambiance, heritage landscapes, and authentic historic character." The organization offers the "Historic House Plaque Program" by which house markers identify the original owner/builder, their occupation (if known), and date. Central to the program, and of particular historical value, is the verification of dates, names, and facts by experienced researchers. The organization offers a stand-alone interactive map on its website that is a guide to all existing plaques, organized by date (**Figure 2-11**). Users can zoom in on the map and click on specific centuries to explore the houses that have markers. In November 2022 the organization awarded its 100th historic house plaque to Newburyport Art's building at 65 Water St.

## Historic Districts

Newburyport has a National Register Historic District and a Local Historic District. The maps for both districts are not easy to find and are not available on any visitor or local information website. In addition, there is no local signage indicating the boundaries of the two districts. Information on building history and house plaques is also not integrated in any way with district maps, and the information on history, sites, and maps resides across many websites and entities.

#### *National Register Historic District*

The National Register Historic District encompasses over 2,500 properties and covers approximately 750 acres which includes much of the downtown (Figure 12-2). The National Register District contains ten sub-districts. While many of the sub-districts highlight residential areas, with an emphasis on the Federal style of architecture which was popular during the city's time of greatest growth and prosperity (up to the War of 1812), there are a few sub-districts that highlight the commercial and industrial roots of the city, including the Merrimac Shipbuilding District and the Pleasant Street Industrial District. In addition to structures from the 17th Century and excellent examples of the Federal style, The National Historic District contains a large number of late 19th Century structures reflecting the shift of the city to a working class industrial base.

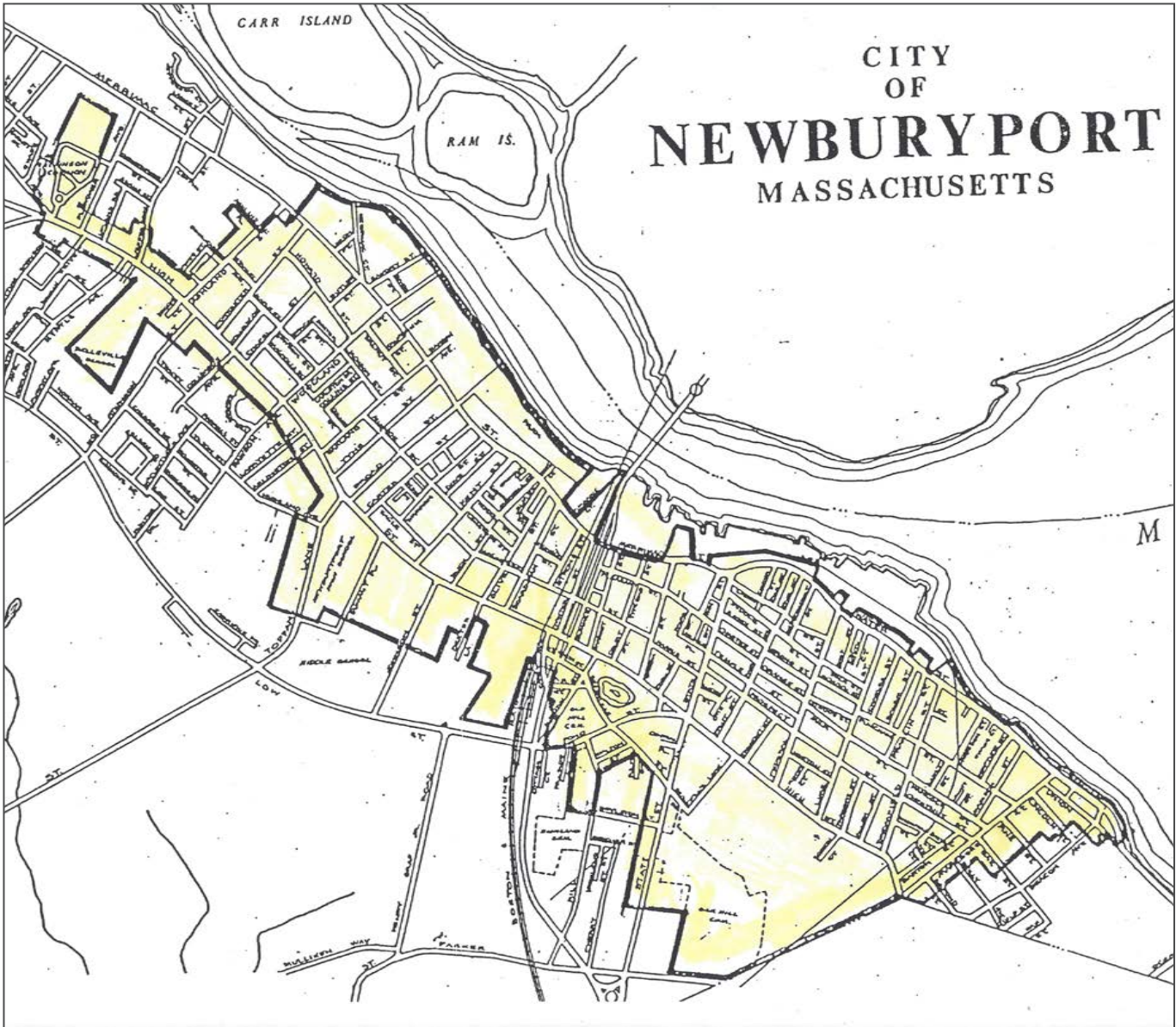
Figure 2-11. Historic House Plaque Location Map



Source: Newburyport Preservation Trust <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/brendan.banovic/viz/Newburyport-MA-Historic-Plaques/Dashboard1?publish=yes>



Figure 2-12. Newburyport National Register Historic District

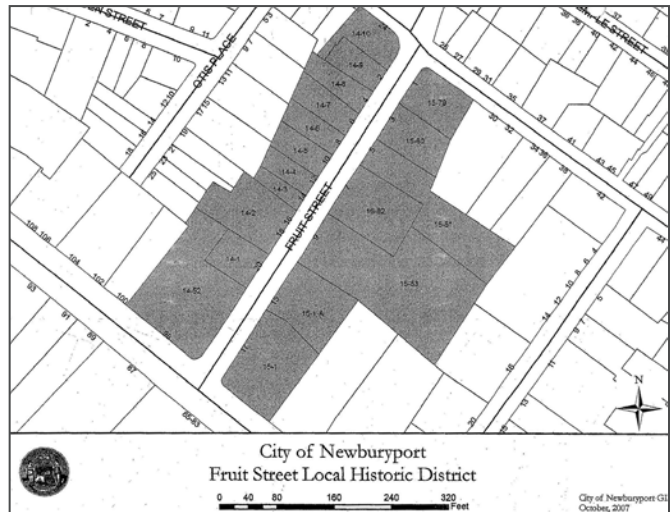


Source: City of Newburyport

### Fruit Street Local Historic District

The Local Historic District encompasses 18 residential properties which are examples of the Federal style of architecture. Fruit Street is located just south of downtown between High and Prospect Streets (Figure 2-13). This short residential street was designated a Local Historic District in 2007 with the purpose of preserving and protecting the character of the houses. Information about the houses on the street is located on the City website with the user required to click on photos of each property to download a pdf with that property's information.

Figure 2-13. Fruit Street Local Historic District



Source: City of Newburyport



## Museums/Resources

### *Custom House Maritime Museum*

The Custom House Maritime Museum (CHMM) is an “education and cultural center; emerging research facility; and a meeting place for people seeking a unique venue for professional or social gatherings.” Housed in the 1835 Custom House, the museum contains galleries showcasing maritime objects, art, models, and historical documents. The Museum collaborates with local educational, artistic, business, and environmental organizations to further its mission and provide events and programs.



*Photo credit: Bob Watts*

### *Museum of Old Newbury*

“For 145 years, the Museum of Old Newbury has been collecting, preserving, and presenting the history of Newburyport, Newbury, West Newbury, Byfield, and Plum Island. The museum includes:

- the 1808 Federal style Cushing House;
- the Perkins Engraving Plant; and
- Carriage House and Privy.

The museum offers lectures, exhibitions, educational programs, school tours, publications, a research library, and cooperation with area groups interested in local history. The collections also include numerous genealogical records including strong representation of documents pertaining to Newbury’s founding families. These records include “primary and secondary source materials that address family genealogies, Newburyport’s maritime heritage, local businesses and industries, landmarks, buildings, cemeteries and more.

Resources available for research use include local history books, ship logs, maps, photographs, genealogy books, diaries, ledgers and ephemera.” Family histories from the Mary Adams Rolfe Collection can be purchased online and in-person appointments can be made to access other archives. The Executive Director estimates that more than 20 million people worldwide can trace their ancestors to Newburyport and thus would have an interest in the town and genealogical records.<sup>8</sup>



*Photo credit: Museum of Old Newbury*

### *Newburyport Public Library and Archival Center*

The Newburyport Public Library offers a range of programs and events from yoga to film nights, to lectures and craft programs. “The Archival Center collection focuses on genealogy and local history, primarily that of Essex County with additional material covering New England. It includes published monographs on Newburyport history and individual family genealogies as well as local primary source material. The Library has a microfilm collection that includes most of The Newburyport Daily News from 1773 to the present, as well as Essex County probate records and other materials.” There is also an extensive historic photograph collection.

### *Other Historic Sites*

- Historic Wharves – under varied ownership, the wharves tell the shipbuilding and port history of the city and some old hidden fragments found in 2011 date back to before the Revolutionary War.
- Powder House – this restored 1822 building was a storehouse for gunpowder, flints, and musket balls, keeping these explosive

materials safe from residential areas. Used during the Civil War, the Powder House is now part of a park and learning center.

- Curzon Grist Mill – this mill is now a private residence on the Artichoke River and occupies the area where a corn mill was first constructed in 1678. While that mill building and subsequent structures burned over the years, part of the present structure dates to the 1840s.
- Plum Island Light – officially known as Newburyport Harbor Light, this structure was built in 1788 and the original 4th order Fresnel lens is still in use. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the lighthouse is owned by the City and leased to the Friends of Plum Island Light.
- Newburyport Superior Courthouse – this building, in the downtown, was designed in the Federal style by famous American architect Charles Bullfinch. Completed in 1805, it is one of the oldest active courthouses in the country.

### Religious Facilities

Religious institutions and facilities provide historic context and architecture and, in some cases, also have available spaces or existing collaborations with other area groups and

initiatives to share spaces. In all, these facilities are historic and arts/cultural assets for the city.

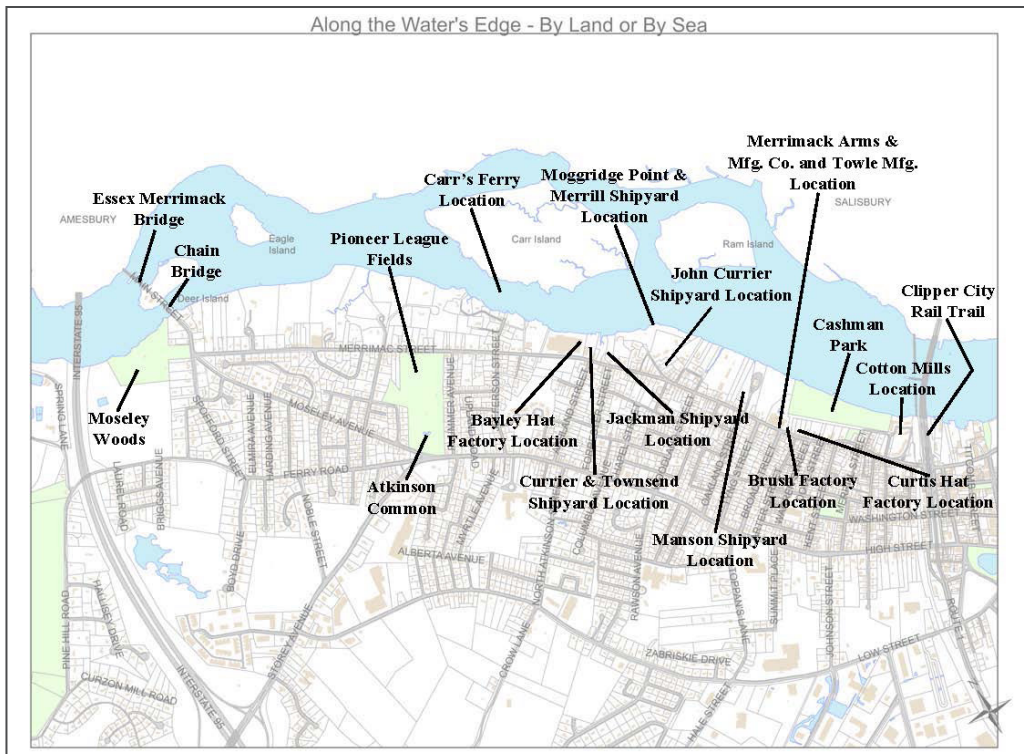
- Belleville Congregational;
- Central Congregational;
- Congregation Ahavas Achim;
- FRS Unitarian Universalist;
- Greek Orthodox Annunciation;
- Immaculate Conception;
- Old South Church;
- People’s United Methodist Church; and
- St. Paul’s Episcopal.

### Historic Trails/Tours

#### Clipper Heritage Trail

The Clipper Heritage Trail Website offers the most complete set of resources for a visitor or student of Newburyport history with audio, written historical information, and maps detailing 16 self-guided tours. The website and smartphone app combined offer tours and downloadable maps (**Figure 2-14**) and brochures (**Figure 2-15**).

**Figure 2-14. Clipper Heritage Trail: Along the Water’s Edge Self-Guided Tour Downloadable Map**



Source: Clipper Heritage Trail, Ghlee E. Woodworth, 2012.



Figure 2-15 Clipper Heritage Trail Oak Hill Cemetery Tour Brochure



Source: Clipper Heritage Trail, Ghee E. Woodworth, 2012.

The Self-guided tours were developed by Ghee Woodworth with the support and sponsorship of the City of Newburyport and numerous local businesses and organizations. Granite pavers were installed in the sidewalk in front of historical points of interests in the downtown area for easy navigation of the Clipper Heritage Trail in July 2013 (Figure 2-16).

Figure 2-16. Clipper Heritage Trail Markers



Source: Clipper Heritage Trail, Ghee E. Woodworth, 2012.

### Natural Resources/Recreation

Newburyport's natural areas and recreational resources make it a strong destination for outdoors activities and recreation, and for naturalist enthusiasts. Natural resources range from local parks and the downtown waterfront to places that are part of regional and national networks and management.

### Major/Regional Destinations

#### Plum Island

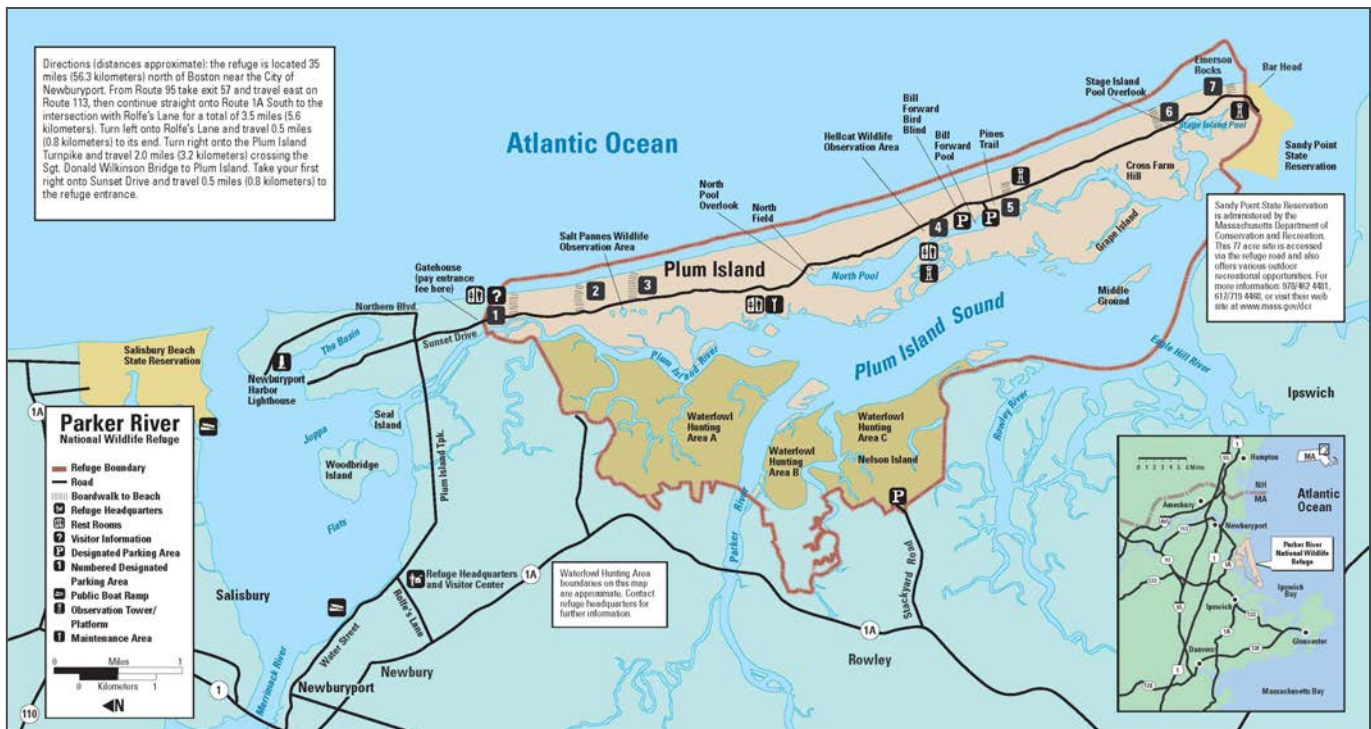
Plum Island is a barrier island that includes local beaches and the entrance to the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. Eleven miles in length, Plum Island spans Newburyport and Newbury.

The island houses year-round residents, vacation rentals, public beaches, the Wildlife Refuge, and commercial enterprises mostly consisting of restaurants along Plum Island Turnpike. The three beach destinations on the island (Wildlife Refuge and North Point in Newburyport and Plum Island Center in Newbury) each have public parking and either public restrooms or portable toilets.

### Parker River National Wildlife Refuge on Plum Island

The Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (The Refuge) has access from Newburyport along the Plum Island Turnpike and runs through Newbury, Rowley and down to Ipswich. The Refuge, managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, encompasses approximately 4,700 acres including beaches and salt marsh and provides a home for over 300 species of birds and additional species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and plants. Public parking lots provide access to the beaches, interpretive trails, salt marsh board walks, and birding towers (Figure 2-17). The Refuge includes a visitor center with an auditorium and classroom with capacity for 85 and 50 people, respectively for community events and those sponsored by The Refuge. In 2017, the most recent year for which data is available, The Refuge received 686,774 visits, of which 116,752, or 17%, lived more than 50 miles away. In addition to habitat for varied and endangered species, The Refuge "also provides high-quality opportunities for nature-based recreation, including walking & biking, wildlife observation & photography, hunting, fishing, paddling, and beach use." Refuge staff, volunteers, and community partners offer a range of nature-based programs and events throughout the year.

Figure 2-17. Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Map



Source: Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Other parts of this wildlife refuge network include:

- Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Newington, NH);
- Wapack National Wildlife Refuge (Greenfield, NH); and
- Thacher Island National Wildlife Refuge (Rockport, MA).

**Joppa Flats/Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center**

The Joppa Flats Education Center overlooks the Merrimack River and is located on the way to Plum Island from Newburyport. The Education Center “offers educational programming for all, including explorations of the habitat “(salt marshes, mudflats, rivers, bays, and coastal waters) through guided tours, marine touch tanks, art exhibits, drop-in programs, and interpretive displays. Mass Audubon also offers the winter events, including the Superbowl of Birding and the Eagle Festival.

**Maudslay State Park**

Maudslay State Park features 19th century gardens and plantings, rolling meadows, towering pines, and one of the largest naturally-occurring stands of mountain laurel in Massachusetts. This park, managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) provides

space for walking, biking, picnicking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and mountain biking. Summer educational programming is also offered.

The Friends of Maudslay (Maudslay State Park Association) is a group committed to the care and preservation of the park, including undertaking restoration projects throughout the park.

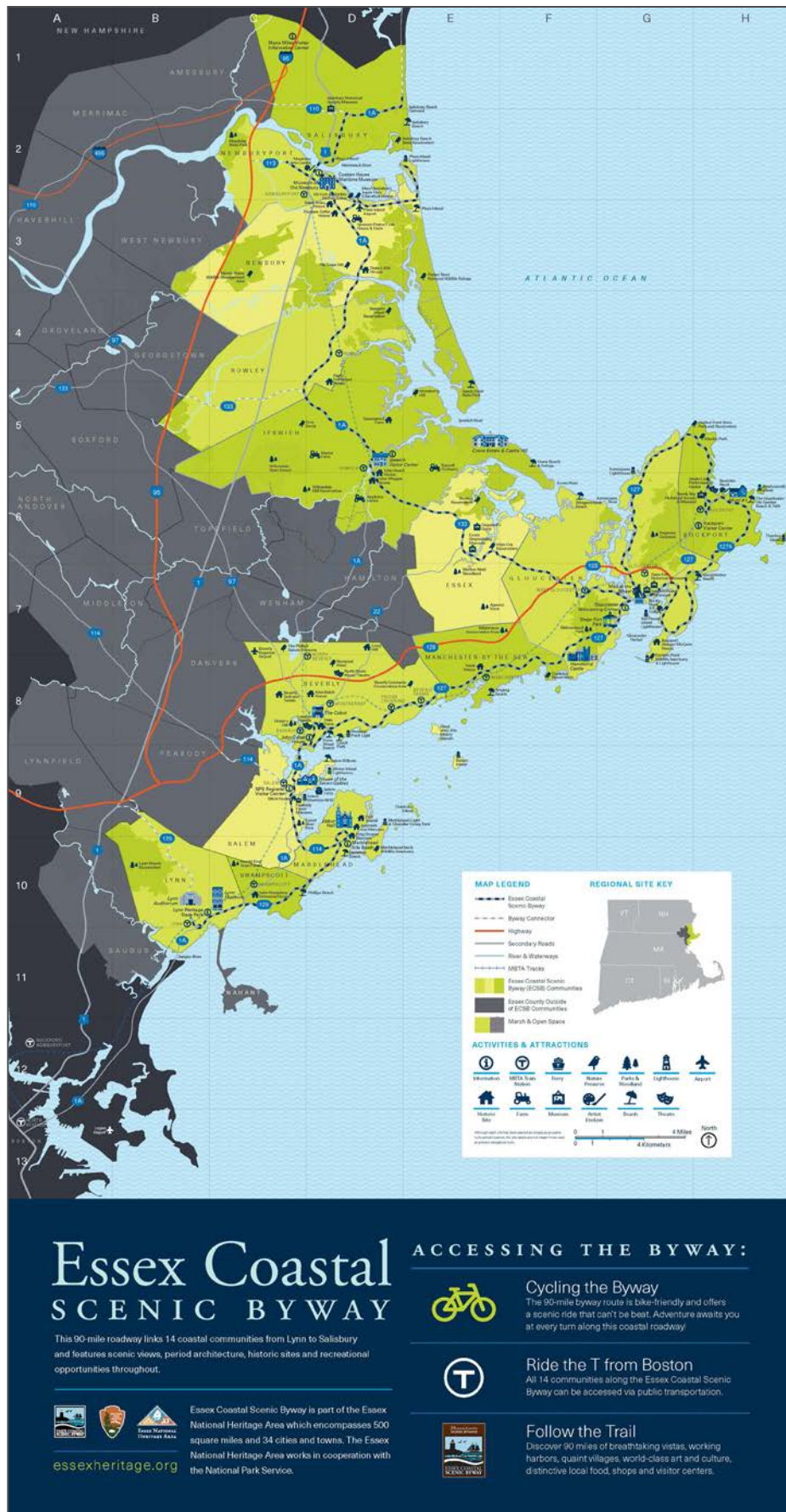
**Regional and Local Nature Trails and Networks**

**Essex National Heritage Area and Essex Coastal Scenic Byway**

Newburyport is part of the Essex National Heritage Area which consists of 34 cities and towns that make up Essex County, spanning the North Shore and Merrimack Valley. The Heritage Area includes the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway (a state scenic byway), a 90-mile roadway linking 14 coastal communities including Newburyport with scenic views, period architecture, historic sites and recreational opportunities (**Figure 2-18**). The Byway receives “federal funding for a comprehensive management plan that is guiding community and regional leaders in their efforts to implement tourism-based economic development.”<sup>9</sup> The Heritage Area website provides information on each community, blog articles on things to do across the area, and a comprehensive brochure of all highlights.



Figure 2-18. Essex National Heritage Area: Essex Coastal Scenic Byway



Source: Essex National Heritage Area, <https://essexheritage.org/explore/>



### ***The Wildlife Refuges of Interstate 95***

The US Fish and Wildlife Service provides an online resource with “a state-by-state glance at national wildlife refuges where travelers seeking a nature break might stop along the way. It includes expert tips about what a visitor might do and see during a one-hour stop at each refuge.”<sup>10</sup> The Parker River National Wildlife Refuge is listed along with Great Bay NWR to the north in NH and the Assabet and Great Meadows NWRs to the south in Sudbury.

### ***Coastal Trails Network***

The Coastal Trails Network consists of an emerging 30-mile network of “public bicycle and pedestrian trails linking the unique coastal features, town centers, neighborhoods and transportation hubs in the communities of Amesbury, Newbury, Newburyport and Salisbury Massachusetts.”<sup>11</sup>

Over 20 miles of the Coastal Trail is complete (**Figure 2-19**). The initiative is overseen by the nonprofit Coastal Trails Coalition (CTC), which is composed of citizens and communities in the Lower Merrimack Valley. The initiative has the support of the Essex National Heritage Commission, the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program, and the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission.

### ***The Little River Nature Trail***

The Little River Trail System is 3.5-mile loop trail adjacent to Woodman Park. The trail offers birding, hiking, and mountain biking opportunities.

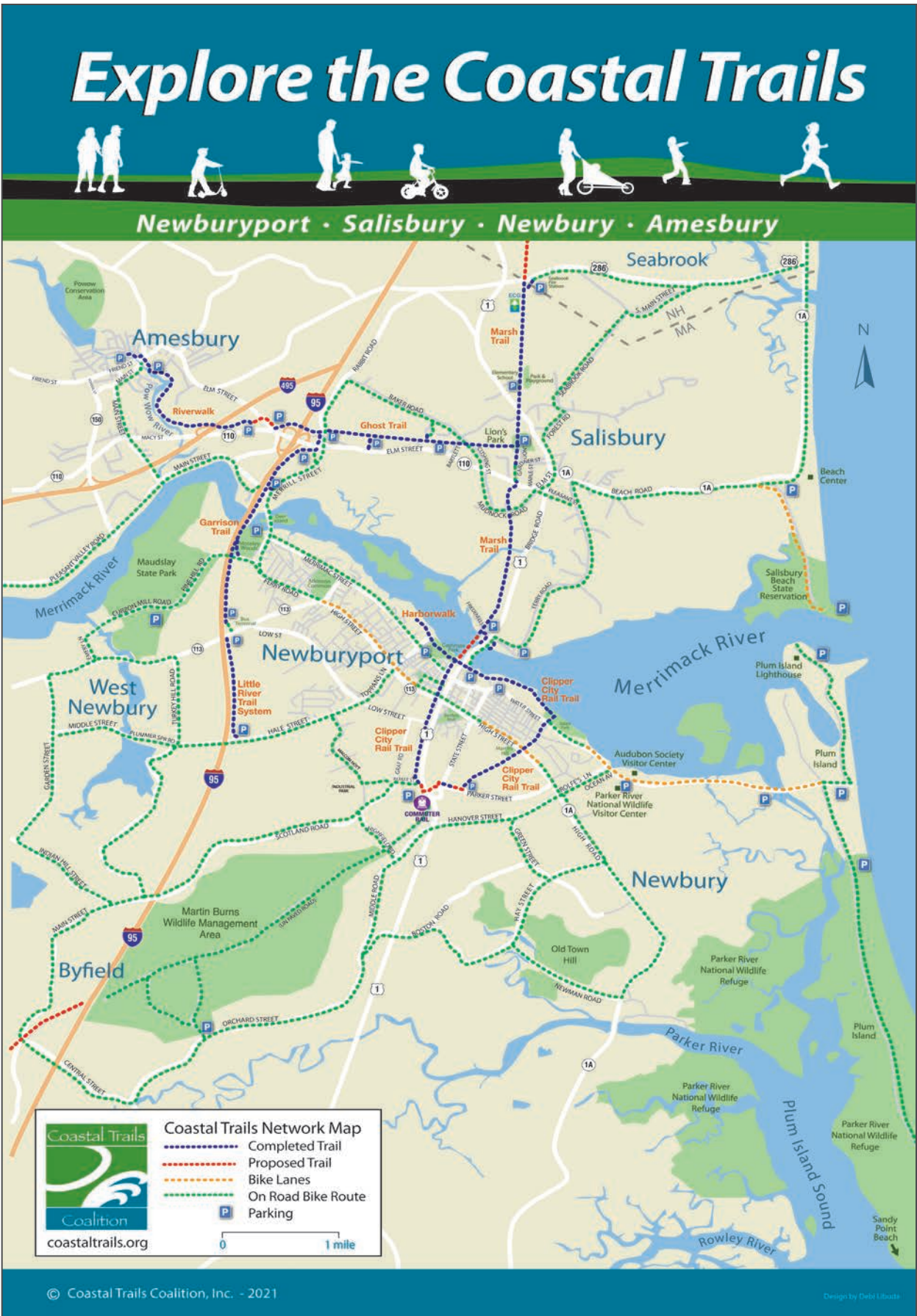
### ***Other Local Recreational and Natural Resources***

- The Common Pasture – this land dates to the original 1635 settlement of the town with large swathes that have been untouched since that time. The Common Pasture stretches from Newburyport to West Newbury and Newbury and is considered important conservation land for its scenic vistas, historical significance, priority and core species habitat, and home for endangered species.
- Merrimack River Harbor – the mouth of the Merrimack River provides a deep and wide channel and is safe for navigation in most weather conditions. Before the construction of the Middlesex Canal, the harbor was well-positioned to receive goods including timber from ports along the river.
- Kettle Hole at Bartlet Mall (the Frog Pond) – adjacent to the Superior Court House in downtown Newburyport, the Bartlet Mall hosts a glacial kettle hole that is known

as the Frog Pond. The Mall and Pond are popular local destinations for walkers and there is ice skating in winter. There are additional opportunities to further program this space in the warmer months should the water quality be improved in the future.

- The Artichoke Reservoir – a natural area around this reservoir along the Artichoke River that contains 24 acres of municipally-owned conservation land in Newburyport and West Newbury. This public-access area contains the Withers Conservation Area that provides a hiking path and shoreline views along the Upper Artichoke Reservoir.
- City Forest – this area sits on the northern side of Turkey Hill, one of the highest areas in the region. Newburyport’s Conservation Commission manages the land where more than 20,000 red pine seedlings were planted in the 20th century. There are paths and some signage.
- Moseley Woods – this is a 1.1-mile trail loop offering access for birding, hiking, and running.

Figure 2-19. Coastal Trail Map



Source: <https://coastaltrails.org/>



## HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

Housing supports economic development by providing residences in Newburyport for part of the regional work force that businesses depend upon to thrive. Transportation offers mobility choices that connect the work force to employers, supports the movement of goods and supports the visitor economy.

### HOUSING IN NEWBURYPORT

In terms of housing needs, the number of Newburyport households (HH) rose 3.4% from 2010 to 2020 (after a 4.6% decrease from 2000 to 2010), while the HH size rose from 2.23 in 2010 to an estimated 2.41 in 2020. This was unlike other parts of the state where household sizes have been decreasing.

The total number of housing units in the city declined by 109 from 8,264 in 2010 to 8,153 in 2020. Notably, rental units' share declined from 28.5% in 2010 to 24.9% in 2020 and are below county (36.2%) and state (37.5%) levels (**Table 2-5**).

While the total number of housing units in the city has decreased, the number of vacant housing units grew by 92 or 14.3% from 2010 to 2020. However, looking more closely at the vacancy figures, the “vacant units with seasonal/recreational/occasional use” almost doubled from 249 in 423 in 2020, accounting for 58% of vacant units (**Table 2-6**). This means that more of the “vacant” homes are being used as either second or seasonal homes, including short-term visitor rentals. The City of Newburyport’s 2018-2022 Housing Production Plan and 2017

Master Plan both provide points of focus for the City to address and prioritize housing needs as they impact residents and the city’s economy. These plans identified the following housing priorities:

- Affordable rental housing for seniors & families;
- Affordable homeownership for low- and middle-income HHs;
- Preservation of existing rental housing; and
- Affordable workforce housing for business employees & essential workers.

### *The 40R Smart Growth & Development District*

As one strategy to increase the desired housing production, the City adopted the 40R Smart Growth District south of downtown and around the MBTA Commuter Rail Station in 2015 (**Figure 2-20**). This district’s intent is to address this need by allowing denser multi-family housing and mixed-use buildings near the MBTA Station. The City initially calculated approximately 540 new housing units to be built within the 40R District and has been reviewing the potential for more.

Since the approval of the 40R District, and after the 2018-2022 Housing Production Plan was completed, 76 units have been built at One Boston Way, and another 84 units are under construction at Three Boston Way. Another 92-unit development at 166 Route 1 has been approved. These projects have set aside 25% of their units as affordable—serving households with income limits at 80% Area Median Income(AMI).



*Photo credits: Bob Watts*

**Table 2-5. Housing Units by Owner or Renter Occupancy**

	2010 Newburyport	2020 Newburyport	Essex County	Massachusetts
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	8,264	8,153	313,956	2,913,009
<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	7,622	7,419	297,254	2,646,980
% Occupied Housing Units - Owner-occupied	71.50%	75.10%	63.80%	62.50%
% Occupied Housing Units - Renter-occupied	28.50%	24.90%	36.20%	37.50%

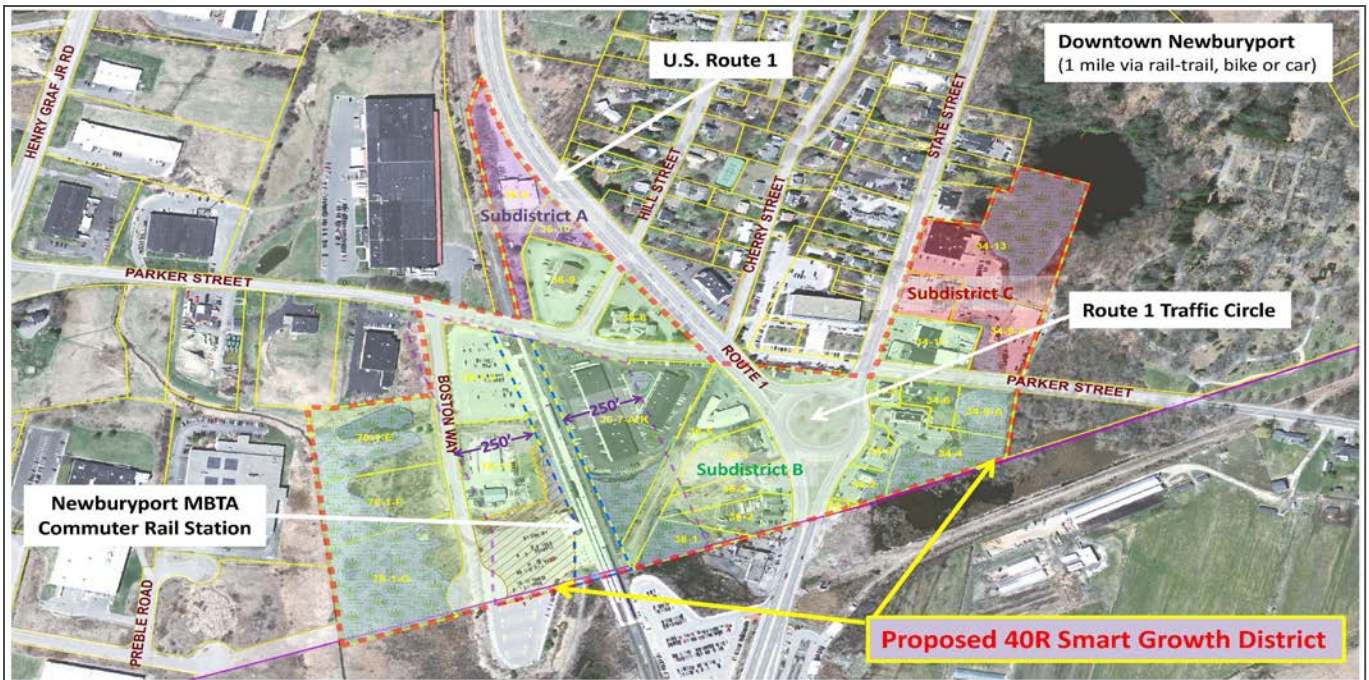
Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; 2010 U.S. Census

**Table 2-6. Vacant and Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Housing Units**

	2010 Newburyport	2020 Newburyport	2020 Essex County	2020 Massachusetts
<b>Total Vacant Housing Units</b>	642	734	16,702	266,029
% of Total Housing Units Vacant	7.80%	9.00%	5.30%	9.10%
% of Vacant Total Units that are seasonal, rec, or occasional use	38.80%	57.60%	31.30%	46.40%
% of Total Housing Units that are seasonal, rec, or occasional	3.00%	5.20%	1.70%	4.20%

Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; 2010 U.S. Census.

**Figure 2-20. 40R Smart Growth District – Newburyport, MA**



Source: City of Newburyport, Office of Planning & Development, January 20, 2015.



# TRANSPORTATION NETWORK AND CONDITIONS

## TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OVERVIEW

Overall, Newburyport has a strong transportation network with good highway access, multiple public transportation options and multi-use walking/bike trails.

In terms of vehicular access, the city has straightforward regional access from Interstate 95, Route 1, Route 1A, and Route 113/Storey Avenue. Vehicular congestion, however, is a problem downtown and in the Storey Avenue area, most noticeably during the peak tourism times.<sup>12</sup>

According to the City's 2018 "Newburyport Parking Program Review and Update," the city has over 2,900 public parking spaces to support the downtown area, including 2,000 free on-street spaces, 700 paid off-street spaces, and 207 spaces in the intermodal Titcomb Street parking garage completed in 2019. However, parking availability and traffic congestion related to parking are concerns, with wayfinding for parking and the specific summer and event peak demand being specifically noted. Several employers reported that the limited availability of long-term parking for employees close to their place of work is a problem.

Newburyport has public transportation access on the MBTA Commuter Rail station on the

Newburyport/Rockport Line and the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MeVa) bus service (Routes 54 and 57). These regional public transit lines link to the multi-use Clipper City Rail Trail and Harborwalk and the intermodal Titcomb Street parking garage downtown. The City's Complete Streets Ordinance and Prioritization Plan prioritize action strategies to enhance walking and biking safety throughout the city.

## COMMUTER HIGHLIGHTS



Looking at Newburyport residents who are employed, the following are highlights regarding commuting patterns:<sup>13</sup>

- 71% of Newburyport's employed residents drove alone to work in 2020, a decrease from 76% in 2010;
- Carpooling to work increased from 5.3% in 2010 to 7.9% in 2020;
- Public transportation use dropped from 4.2% in 2010 to 3.1% in 2020;
- Walking to work increased from 3.5% in 2010 to 5.7% in 2020;
- Estimated travel to work time for Newburyport residents averaged 34 minutes in 2020 vs. 30.2 minutes for Essex County, and 30 minutes for the state; and
- 10.5% of Newburyport residents worked from home in 2020- an increase from 8.7% in 2010 and above county (7.6%) and state (8.3%) levels.

Conversely, looking at employees who work in Newburyport, in 2019 (**Table 2-7**), almost 17%

also lived in the city, while about 8.2 % lived in Haverhill, 7.3% lived in Amesbury, and a significant percent living elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> On a more regional level (**Table 2-8**), about 63% commuted from Essex County, about 15% from Rockingham County, NH, and just under 7% from Middlesex County, MA.

**Table 2-7. Residence of Workers Employed in Newburyport by City or Town, 2019**

Place of Residence	Number	Percentage
Newburyport	1,915	16.5%
Haverhill	955	8.2%
Amesbury	846	7.3%
Salisbury	523	4.5%
Newbury	398	3.4%
Lawrence	302	2.6%
Merrimac	248	2.1%
West Newbury	206	1.8%
Georgetown	200	1.7%
Seabrook	195	1.7%
All Other Locations	5,841	50.2%
<b>Total all Jobs</b>	<b>11,629</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics



**Table 2-8. Residence of Workers Employed in Newburyport by County, 2019**

Residence	Number	Percentage
Essex County, MA	7,371	63.4%
Rockingham County, NH	1,740	15.0%
Middlesex County, MA	779	6.7%
Hillsborough County, NH	209	1.8%
Suffolk County, MA	204	1.8%
Strafford County, NH	167	1.4%
York County, ME	165	1.4%
Norfolk County, MA	152	1.3%
Worcester County, MA	135	1.2%
Plymouth County, MA	124	1.1%
All Other Locations	583	5.0%
<b>Total all Jobs</b>	<b>11,629</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ARTS, CULTURE, & RECREATION ECOSYSTEM

Implementation of Newburyport’s economic development strategy will occur in the context of a larger ecosystem of local and regional organizations and entities/initiatives that deliver relevant projects, programs and services. This section summarizes this ecosystem in order to identify resources and partners that the City can use to deploy its strategy and identify ways to fill system gaps.

**Table 2-9** details the existing ecosystem by type of activity for government entities, civic/nonprofit organizations and private for-profit businesses.

**Table 2-9. Newburyport Economic Development/Arts, Culture & Recreation Ecosystem by Activity and Organization Type**

Type of Activity	Government	Civic/Nonprofit Organizations	Private For-profit
<b>Strategy Formulation/Coordination</b>	1. Mayor's Office 2. Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)	1. Chamber Economic Development Action Committee (EDAC)	
<b>Business Attraction &amp; Recruitment</b>		1. Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce 2. MassEcon	1. New England Development
<b>Place/Tourism Marketing</b>	1. Mayor's Office	1. Greater Newburyport Chamber 2. North of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau 3. Newburyport Preservation Trust 4. Museum of Old Newbury	
<b>Small Business Assistance</b>	1. Small Business Development Center-Salem 2. Salem Enterprise Center 3. Cultural Council 4. Mass Growth Capital Corp	1. Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce 2. SCORE 3. Mass Manufacturing Extension Partnership	1. Local Banks
<b>Workforce Development</b>	1. Merrimack Valley Workforce Board/ Mass Hire 2. Commonwealth Corp 3. Whittier Tech HS 4. Northern Essex Community College	1. Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) 2. Opportunity Works, Inc.	
<b>Real Estate Development</b>	1. Historic Commission 2. Newburyport Waterfront Trust 3. MassDevelopment 4. Newburyport Housing Trust 5. Newburyport Housing Authority	1. Newburyport Preservation Trust 2. Business & Industrial Park Association	1. Private property owners 2. Private developers
<b>Events &amp; Programming</b>	1. Newburyport Library, Youth Services, Council on Aging 2. Maudslay State Park 3. Parker River National Wildlife Refuge 4. Newburyport Waterfront Trust	1. Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce 2. Newburyport Arts Collective 3. Newburyport Art Association 4. Mass Audubon/Joppa Flats 5. Port Parks Alliance 6. Newburyport Documentary Film Festival 7. Custom House Maritime Museum 8. Museum of Old Newbury 9. Newburyport Preservation Trust 10. Firehouse Center for the Performing Arts 11. Historic New England 12. Essex National Heritage Area	1. Private property owners & businesses (e.g., The Tannery Farmers' Market)
<b>Infrastructure, Open Space &amp; Facilities</b>	1. City Engineering, Parks, Public Services, Planning & Development, related Commissions 2. Newburyport Waterfront Trust 3. Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MeVa) 4. Parker River National Wildlife Refuge 5. Maudslay State Park	1. Mayor Gayden W. Morrill Charitable Foundation 2. Mass Audubon 3. Port Parks Alliance	



The information in **Table 2-9**, along with feedback from stakeholder interviews and focus groups, provides insights into Newburyport’s economic development and arts, culture and recreation ecosystems. These insights include:

**SIGNIFICANT REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES EXIST IN SEVERAL AREAS:**

- Tourism and destination marketing (North of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Essex National Heritage Trail, Essex Coastal Scenic Byway, the Wildlife Refuges of I-95, and the Coastal Trails Network);
- Small business support including one-on-one counseling, training classes, peer learning networks and customized technical assistance from several organizations (Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Salem Enterprise Center, and Massachusetts Manufacturing Partnership);
- Workforce development including degree and non-degree skills training for occupations in several industries (construction, manufacturing, health care, restaurants/food service, hospitality,

technology and others), apprenticeship programs and customized training from regional educational institutions and consortia (Whittier Technical High School, Northern Essex Community College, North East Advanced Manufacturing Consortium); and

- Barriers to accessing these resources exists due to their distance from Newburyport and the alignment of some services with business needs.

**STRONG LOCAL CAPACITY EXISTS IN SEVERAL AREAS:**

- The Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce provides business networking and education, connections to resources and tourism marketing services (including staffing the seasonal downtown visitor information center), as well as organizing several events;
- Events and programming through multiple organizations that support the four-season event schedule described earlier and many other activities;



- Public infrastructure, facilities and services provided by the City of Newburyport;
- Local private banks which provide real estate and business credit, facilitate access to business development assistance, and have foundations that provide grant funding for local nonprofit organizations; and
- Real estate development through multiple developers and property owners that plan and complete projects to supply housing, commercial and industrial space.

### **THERE ARE NOTABLE GAPS IN LOCAL CAPACITY:**

- No organization exists that focuses exclusively on Newburyport’s economic development and there is no City or nonprofit full-time staff with a primary responsibility for economic development;
- Lack of unified downtown management and marketing under a single organization or coordinating structure;
- Absence of unified tourism/visitor branding, marketing and management; and
- Absence of unified arts, cultural, and history advocacy, marketing and branding.

### **STRONG REGIONAL VISITOR DESTINATIONS EXIST:**

- Open space, natural resources and wildlife/natural areas including Plum Island, Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, and Maudslay State Park;
- Firehouse Center for the Arts;
- Custom House Maritime Museum; and
- Newburyport Historic District.

### **LACK OF ONE-STOP INFORMATION SOURCE AND GUIDANCE ON THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE WITH CLEAR MESSAGING:**

- Multiple sources of information, no complete online maps showing trails, destinations, and historic districts in context and in relation to one another. Maps are hard to find, information is scattered across sites and often found in unlikely places;
- No unified tourism/visitor branding, marketing, and management. There is no single message, historic resources and

destinations are often not mentioned on “top things to do” sites for Newburyport, and arts and cultural assets are also hidden;

- Multiple websites/confusing mix of sites for locals and visitors including: Little River Trail System; Essex Heritage Area; Market Square Historic District; Cultural District.
- Cultural District is mentioned on the City website along with a self-guided walking tour but there is no link, additional information or map; and
- The Historic District is not clearly marked or marketed on City and other websites.



*Photo credit: Bob Watts*

### **SECTION 2 ENDNOTES**

- 1 This data is for businesses and organizations with employees that are part of the unemployment insurance system and does not include self-employed individuals. Data for 2021 is used since it is the most recent year for which employment data was available.
- 2 The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the non-institutionalized civilian population 16 or older that is employed or actively looking for work.
- 3 Data on poverty rates and household income is from the American Community Survey 5-year 2016 to 2020 sample.
- 4 Letter to the City Council from the City of Newburyport liaison and the Chamber of Commerce, January 18, 2013.
- 5 The City received a \$15,000 grant from the MCC for the Cultural District in 2022 and \$7,500 in 2021.
- 6 Trillink.com
- 7 <https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/planning-development/pages/rail-trail-art-and-features>
- 8 CEDS public meeting 1/11/23.
- 9 <https://coastalbyway.org/communities/>
- 10 <https://www.fws.gov/story/wildlife-refuges-i-95>
- 11 <https://coastaltrails.org/>
- 12 Source: “2017 Newburyport Master Plan” and “2019 Downtown Newburyport Traffic Circulation Study.”
- 13 Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; American Community Survey, 2006-2010.
- 14 U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2019).



*Photo credit: Bob Watts*

3

# SWOT Analysis



## section 3 SWOT ANALYSIS

The consultant team identified Newburyport's key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to better assess factors shaping the City's economic development strategy and to connect strategy choices to specific assets, liabilities, opportunities, and risks. The SWOT analysis draws on information from the following sources:

- City and regional existing conditions analysis;
- Interviews and focus groups with diverse stakeholders including City staff and elected officials, businesses, real estate developers and brokers, local banks, and arts/cultural/historic/recreational organizations and destinations;
- Information and observations from the CEDS Steering Committee; and
- Consultant observations.

**Figure 3-1** summarizes the SWOT analysis results. The following discussion highlights key findings under each category and then discusses their implications for the economic development strategy.

### NEWBURYPORT'S STRENGTHS

Newburyport has many strengths that provide a strong foundation for future economic development. These assets fit within five categories:

- **Amenities and quality of place.** Newburyport has a rich and diverse combination of natural and recreational resources, arts/culture/historic activities and attractions, a walkable and attractive downtown with many restaurants, shops and services, good schools and a variety of neighborhoods and housing options. These amenities make Newburyport a desirable place to live, contribute to the city's well-educated and skilled local labor force, attract many visitors that help sustain local businesses and generate tax revenue and help to attract businesses that value local amenities in their location decisions.
- **Economic base and clusters.** Newburyport has a diverse economic base with several sizeable and competitive industry clusters—several of which serve as regional centers within the Lower Merrimack Valley. This diversity provides multiple opportunities for future economic development and reduces risks from economic and market forces that may hurt a single cluster. The size and role as a regional center for key clusters—health care, dining, arts/culture/recreation help to sustain them and attract other businesses that seek to benefit from locating in a regional center.
- **Built environment.** Multiple aspects of the city's buildings and infrastructure are economic advantages. These include: the preservation of its downtown commercial buildings and housing stock; the walkable pedestrian character of the Downtown and Waterfront; the trail network providing access to the waterfront and connections across the city; a large supply of downtown parking; water and wastewater treatment infrastructure; a large business/industrial park; a medical campus; and a strong local road network that connects to important interstate and state roadways.
- **Resident skills, creativity and civic engagement.** Newburyport's residents are a key asset that contribute to economic development in many ways: providing a skilled labor force for many businesses; as entrepreneurs starting and growing new businesses; providing leaders and volunteers for the city's many civic organizations and for the arts/culture/historic events and organizations; and as active citizens participating in public planning and decision-making.

Figure 3-1. SWOT Analysis Summary

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse and growing economic base that is a regional health care, dining, recreation, and arts/cultural center</li> <li>• Historic, pedestrian-oriented downtown with mix of restaurants, independent retailers, and arts, cultural and historic destinations</li> <li>• Ocean &amp; riverfront uses and attractions</li> <li>• Regional network of open spaces, abundance of green spaces</li> <li>• Large business &amp; industrial park with business diversity</li> <li>• Educated and skilled labor force with active entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Good highway access plus commuter rail and bus transportation</li> <li>• Local banks active in real estate, business lending, and philanthropy</li> <li>• Active regional chamber of commerce with strong focus on Newburyport</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to attract workers and diverse residents with high housing cost and limited affordable housing stock</li> <li>• Public transportation services for commuting</li> <li>• Availability and location of downtown parking for employees</li> <li>• Economic development capacity and alignment of efforts</li> <li>• Complex and slow development permitting process</li> <li>• Cost and limited supply of commercial and industrial real estate</li> <li>• Absence of strong identity and branding to attract visitors</li> <li>• Weak gateway from I-95</li> <li>• Fragmented marketing and promotion efforts</li> <li>• Absence of hotel/lodging</li> <li>• Information and wayfinding to discover amenities/destinations</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Newburyport as a strong North of Boston visitor destination</li> <li>• Strengthen Newburyport as a regional dining, shopping, and arts/culture/entertainment destination</li> <li>• Leverage development opportunities at the Waterfront West site</li> <li>• Update zoning for business &amp; industrial park to support and attract business growth</li> <li>• Redevelopment at Storey Avenue and 40R district to expand workforce housing and commercial space supply</li> <li>• Foster and sustain entrepreneurs and small businesses</li> <li>• Capitalize on regional training and transportation systems to address workforce needs</li> <li>• Capitalize on regional resources to support small businesses</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIMBYism and resistance to change</li> <li>• Climate change impacts on key infrastructure, businesses, and attractions</li> <li>• Competition from nearby cities and towns with lower real estate and business costs</li> <li>• Competition from visitor destinations with stronger identity, branding, and marketing</li> <li>• Infrastructure capacity not meeting needs for future growth</li> <li>• Loss of identity and character from growth of chains, non-active ground floor uses, and loss of independent shops and cultural uses</li> <li>• River pollution impacting waterfront recreation and attractiveness</li> </ul>



## WEAKNESSES

Newburyport faces a number of weaknesses that impair its ability to fully capitalize on its strengths and opportunities. These weaknesses cut across four main areas:

- **Limited implementation capacity and alignment.** Without any full-time City staff or organization dedicated to economic development, Newburyport lacks core capacity needed to implement a strategy and on-going initiatives. Within City government, work related to economic development is divided among several staff, often as an add-on to their primary responsibilities. While the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce is involved in economic development, it faces its own capacity constraints. Furthermore, as a membership-based organization with a regional focus, it is not well-suited to be the City's primary economic development entity. Newburyport is also challenged in coordinating and aligning the work of different organizations and stakeholders to advance shared priorities. Economic development is inherently multi-sector—it depends on the complementary resources and actions of City government, for-profit and nonprofit businesses, civic organizations, and the philanthropic community. Current efforts are often fragmented, do not promote a common value proposition about Newburyport, and lack formal and informal structures for communication and coordination.
- **Weak branding , marketing and communications.** Newburyport has not proactively defined and marketed what it offers and what differentiates it as a place to visit, establish and grow a business, or work. This has resulted in multiple, incomplete and confusing messages for visitors and very limited messaging and marketing to attract businesses and workers. Additional weaknesses in this realm include hard-to-access, incomplete and confusing information on Newburyport's rich collection of experiences and destinations and the I-95/Story Avenue gateway failing to convey what Newburyport is like and has to offer.
- **Insufficient infrastructure and limited services.** Like many older cities, Newburyport has infrastructure in need of updating and investment. Some of these needs, including downtown parking, water and sewer capacity reflect its growth and economic success. Other needs, such as better pedestrian infrastructure and connections in residential areas and in portions of the business and industrial park, reflect changing uses and needs over time. Infrastructure investment requirements are heightened by the need to protect significant economic assets along the waterfront from sea level rise and increased storm and flood risk. A related weakness is limited public transportation services to connect the regional workforce to Newburyport businesses; MVRTA bus transportation is not frequent and does not cover early morning and late night work schedules for many businesses.
- **High real estate costs, limited supply and complex regulations.** While Newburyport has significant real estate assets, current conditions create several weaknesses. High real estate costs in Newburyport make it challenging for businesses and arts/cultural/historic organizations to stay and grow in the city. Several businesses and organizations have left Newburyport due to the high cost of real estate. Employers report that high housing costs are a barrier to attracting and retaining



workers. There is very little land available for new development and a limited supply of vacant commercial and industrial space, which constrains the city's ability to attract new businesses and accommodate growth of existing enterprises. Expanding the supply of real estate for all uses, including housing, will require infill and redevelopment, which is often more difficult and costly than building on vacant land. Existing City regulations can be complex, adding to development costs and limiting development. These regulations and opposition to new development can make obtaining approvals for new businesses and development projects time-consuming and costly. Current zoning in the Business and Industrial Park does not reflect the increasing diversity of businesses seeking to locate there and limits development heights and density. Complying with zoning dimensional and parking requirements, building codes and health codes are particularly challenging for the historic structures and small lots in downtown Newburyport. In addition, the reuse of second floor spaces downtown may be hampered by code requirements. Businesses expressed concerns about how stringently and consistently these regulations are interpreted and applied.

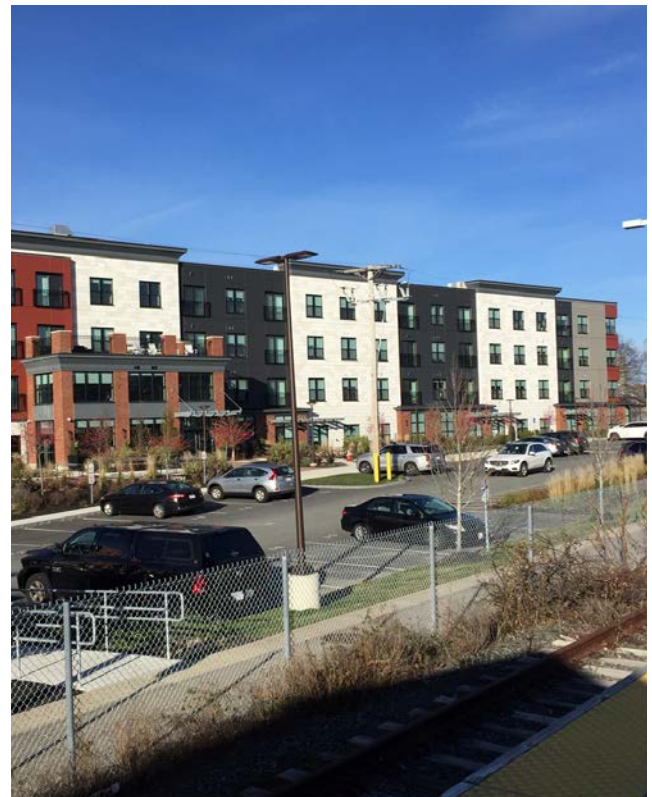
## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are several promising opportunities to strengthen and expand Newburyport's economy that capitalize on its own resources and favorable market conditions. Four key opportunities were identified:

- **Expand its market share of the visitor and regional market and audience.** As noted above under strengths, Newburyport has significant assets and attractions to draw both regional customers and visitors to New England. Its diverse combination of attractions, historic significance and preservation and density of dining, unique shops and arts/culture/historic activities within a pedestrian-oriented downtown and riverfront provide a strong value proposition to attract more people and grow its market share. It is also well-positioned, with its large and diverse cluster of downtown restaurants, to attract more spending from the \$195 million market among lower Merrimack Valley households. Visitors to Massachusetts and the Boston region are an even larger market - with approximately 29 million visitors in 2019, spending an estimated \$24.9 billion, including \$6.4 billion in lodging, \$5 billion in food, and \$2.2 billion on general retail. Given the limitations of Newburyport's current

marketing activities, there is an opportunity to more fully tap these large markets through improved branding and definition of its assets and unique character as a destination and more effective and expanded marketing. Attracting more visitors, especially in the peak season, does present trade-offs and added city service costs to manage expanded activity and congestion. It may also displace local resident patronage of downtown businesses.

- **Capitalize on its real estate assets.** Newburyport has several important sites and districts that provide opportunities for new real estate development to support business growth, address housing needs and support its many arts, cultural and historical enterprises and activities. These opportunities are threefold: (1) new development at vacant sites, particularly Waterfront West; (2) infill and redevelopment in existing development districts, including the Business and Industrial Park, 40R district and Storey Avenue; and (3) matching vacant and under-utilized spaces with priority economic development uses. To capitalize on these real estate opportunities, more proactive efforts will be needed to plan development aligned with economic development goals, establish appropriate zoning to facilitate this development, market Newburyport





and specific sites and match the special needs of arts/cultural/historic organizations with vacant and under-utilized spaces.

- **Apply the skills and creativity of its population.** Newburyport's existing population is one of its greatest resources that has been vital to its economic success to date. Local entrepreneurs and professionals have established many new businesses; local talent and creativity drives the city's vibrant arts and cultural sector; and civic engagement and volunteerism has shaped the city's development and supports its many civic activities, organizations and events. Newburyport can sustain and expand the economic development impact of this key asset by expanding opportunities and support for local entrepreneurs, artists and nonprofit organizations and finding ways to simplify regulations and processes and remove other barriers to local business and civic entrepreneurship.
- **Utilize regional resources to support economic development.** Newburyport has access to significant resources in the regional ecosystems for economic development and for the arts and culture sector. There are numerous opportunities to apply these resources to support the city's economic development priorities. These opportunities are especially relevant to support strategies related to small business development, workforce development, and visitor marketing. Through strengthening existing relationships and working with key regional organizations to design new services or projects that are customized to local needs, Newburyport can maximize the benefits from these resources.

## THREATS

Several threats pose risks to Newburyport's continued prosperity and ability to maintain important community assets. Local actions to manage and mitigate the potential impacts from these threats should be part of Newburyport's economic development strategy. These threats are threefold:

- **Competition from other communities and destinations.** Newburyport faces competition on two fronts. First, other Merrimack Valley communities with lower real estate costs and faster, easier and less costly permitting processes may draw existing businesses, artists and nonprofit organizations away from the city and gain a larger share of future development.

Over time, significant losses of these enterprises threaten to weaken Newburyport's economic base, the character of its downtown and its position as a regional economic center in some sectors. High rents and growth of chain stores and/or non-active ground floor uses add to this threat. Second, Newburyport competes for visitors with other destinations—some of which have more visitor facilities and amenities, are better known and/or have more extensive and effective visitor marketing efforts. If this competition reduces Newburyport's visitor activity and spending, it will weaken the market support for local businesses and arts and culture venues, potentially leading to more failures and vacancies.

- **Climate Change and Infrastructure.** Newburyport is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change on sea level rise and more frequent and intensive storms since many of its attractions and significant business and real estate assets are on or near the ocean and riverfront. Without careful planning and sufficient investment in infrastructure and other climate adaptation actions, Newburyport may suffer significant damage to and/or loss of these key assets and the associated economic losses. Newburyport also faces a related risk that the capacity of critical local infrastructure, including water and wastewater systems may not keep pace with new growth development and growing stresses related to climate change.
- **Managing and Adapting to Change.** Every community faces the challenge of adapting their policies, regulations and activities to address and manage the impact of changing conditions. Resistance to or long delays in recognizing and responding to critical changes poses a threat to Newburyport's continued economic development. A combination of "not in my back yard" (NIMBY) opposition to development and/or infrastructure projects, a complex set of overlapping regulations and resistance to revisiting or adapting long-standing regulations and their administration make adapting to change difficult in Newburyport.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Several themes emerge from the SWOT analysis that are critical for Newburyport to address in its economic development strategy:

- **Expanding economic development capacity and alignment.** Newburyport needs to expand staff and organizational capacity dedicated to economic development to be able to effectively implement new initiatives. Economic development is inherently multisector and requires collective and coordinated action across government, private industry, and the civic and nonprofit sector. Therefore, a related need is to continue the alignment of stakeholders around shared goals and priorities begun with the CEDS formulation along with coordinated actions as the strategies are implemented.
- **Establishing and marketing a clearer Newburyport image and brand.** To capitalize on its significant and multifaceted assets to sustain and grow its economy, Newburyport needs to establish a strong and shared brand to better market the benefits of visiting, living, working and locating a business in the city. The City also needs to develop audience-specific messages and outreach to these different markets (businesses, visitors, etc.) to ensure the messages are on point and reaching the correct audiences.
- **Strengthening the enterprise support and advocacy ecosystem.** With small businesses and the arts/culture/historic sector facing new challenges with higher costs, increased competition and post-pandemic recovery, Newburyport needs to ensure that local and regional resources are focused on supporting these two key parts of the local economy.
- **Revisiting and updating infrastructure and regulations.** This updating is important to ensure that Newburyport's zoning and regulatory environment enables existing properties and future real estate development to respond to changing market forces and address the threats posed by climate change while advancing city economic development goals.



Photo credits: Bob Watts



Photo credit: Bob Watts





Photo credit: Bob Watts





# 4

## Economic Development Strategy



# 4 NEWBURYPORT COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

This section details the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) prepared during the strategy planning process. Economic development contributes to Newburyport’s well-being in several ways:

- Provides the economic underpinning for the downtown and supports the investments needed to maintain the city’s historic character and architecture;
- Provides the services and amenities that contribute to Newburyport’s excellent quality of life, including restaurants, shops, arts/cultural/historic activities, and health services;
- Generates significant tax base to help fund municipal services and infrastructure, and lowers the tax burden on residential property owners; and
- Creates local employment and business ownership opportunities for residents.

The CEDS is a proactive economic development strategy designed to help preserve and improve what people love about Newburyport while allowing the City to respond to new opportunities and challenges that are critical to its continued vitality. The CEDS is guided by the following vision statement that reflects goals and values articulated by the Steering Committee and other stakeholders:

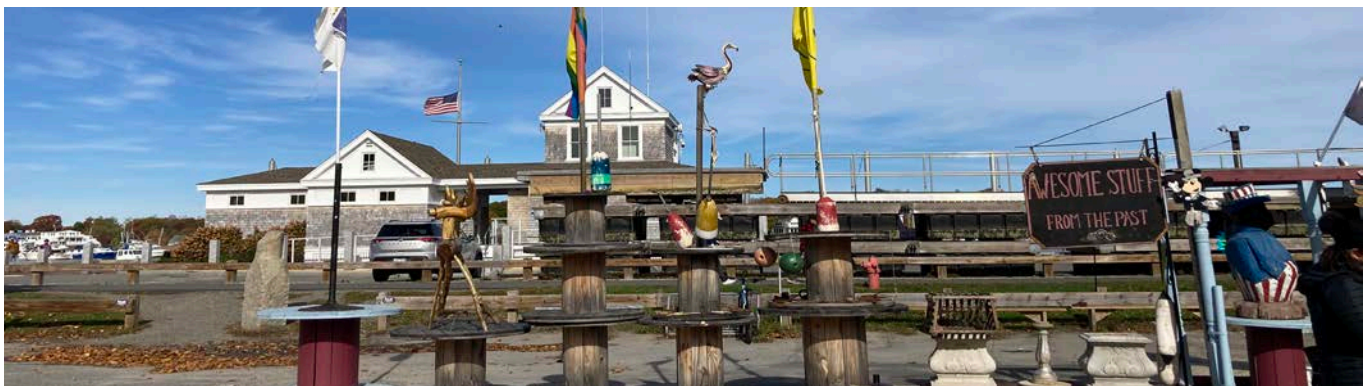
Newburyport has a diverse economy that embraces and supports entrepreneurship and local independently-owned businesses and works to maintain a vibrant downtown, strong Business and Industrial Park, and health services campus. Appropriate development at under-utilized properties and districts is supported to expand the supply of diverse housing options, provide space for businesses and entrepreneurs

in a range of industries and in a manner that enhances the pedestrian environment, minimizes environmental impacts, and promotes resiliency. Newburyport’s government, business, civic, and nonprofit sectors continue to invest in, and support, its rich historical, cultural, recreational, and natural resources to benefit residents, workers, and visitors, alike. The community welcomes visitors and recognizes the importance of a strong tourism sector in supporting local businesses and a vibrant downtown. The City and others work to promote activities and amenities that benefit both residents and visitors, and mitigate undesirable impacts associated with peak levels of tourism.

To advance this vision, the CEDS incorporates seven strategies that address distinct yet related areas that respond to key opportunities, threats, and weaknesses highlighted by the CEDS planning process:

1. Economic Development Capacity;
2. Small Business Support;
3. Unified Branding & Marketing for Tourism, Arts & Culture;
4. Support & Advocacy for Arts, Cultural & Historical Assets;
5. Real Estate Supply;
6. Workforce Attraction and Development; and
7. Climate Action and Resiliency.

A detailed plan of action for each strategy follows that explains its purpose, implementation parties, funding needs and options, and phasing, and elaborates on the strategy’s component projects and activities.



# #1

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

**Newburyport lacks sustained institutionalized capacity to advance its economic development vision and goals, address important opportunities and challenges, and work to coordinate and align the efforts of government, the nonprofit and for profit business community, and civic sector to achieve shared goals and priorities. As noted in the SWOT analysis, there is no full-time staff person dedicated to economic development, significant gaps exist in Newburyport’s tourism and arts/cultural/historic assets marketing infrastructure, and the City is not optimizing its use of resources within the state and regional ecosystem. A combination of new City staffing, expanding the capacity of the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC), and stronger relationships with, and utilization of, state and regional resources is needed to address these capacity gaps and enable CEDS implementation.**

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy comprises the following five components:

1. Hire a full-time City Economic Development Director;
2. Create a cross-sector Economic Development Committee to oversee strategy implementation;
3. Revive the Business and Industrial Park Association;
4. Expand the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce’s capacity to be a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO); and
5. Strengthen relationships with, and increase utilization of, state and regional organizations and resources.

Another tool available to add capacity is a Business Improvement District (BID), a Main Street organization, or another entity to undertake dedicated efforts to improve, manage, and market Newburyport’s downtown. A BID is initiated by property owners and funded through property assessments. Other options are typically nonprofit organizations initiated by downtown stakeholders with private and public sector participation and support. While a consensus does not currently exist to create this type of organization, downtown stakeholders may want to consider one of these tools in the future, especially if downtown Newburyport faces new challenges and needs expanded management and improvement efforts.



## IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS

The City, through the Mayor's Office, needs to establish the Economic Development Committee and incorporate funding for a new Economic Development Director in FY2024 (and future budgets). Once funds are appropriated by the City Council, the hiring process can begin under the direction of the Mayor's Office and the Office of Planning & Development.

The GNCC needs to lead efforts to expand its funding and capacity as a DMO function, working closely with all of the tourism-related sectors.

Strengthening relationships with regional organizations is an ongoing activity that encompasses all the organizations and stakeholders involved in CEDS implementation and will be especially important for the new Economic Development Director.

## FUNDING NEEDS AND OPTIONS

There are two major funding needs to expand economic development capacity:

- Ongoing funding for the new Economic Development Director position; and
- Sustained funding to expand the GNCC visitor-focused DMO activities.

City budget appropriations are needed to address the first funding need. Two promising funding options exist to address the second need:

1. Creating a cooperative paid marketing program among the restaurants, retailers, lodging owners, visitor destinations/services, and arts/cultural/historic enterprises to fund a robust and sustained visitor marketing program. DMOs in other cities, including Gloucester and Salem, rely on this revenue for the majority of their funding. Options should be created at different levels to reflect varied needs and resources and to make participation feasible for small businesses, artists, and nonprofit organizations.
2. Establishing a Tourism Marketing District. This is a new state-authorized tool to fund tourism marketing. It allows the majority of hotel and motel owners within a city or other defined "marketing district" to petition to establish a new 2% hotel/motel tax to fund tourism marketing efforts. The new tax is provided to the regional tourism marketing organization (North of Boston for Newburyport) to implement expanded marketing efforts

in partnership with local stakeholders. If established in Newburyport, the additional fee could raise close to \$100,000 per year.

## PHASING

Since economic development capacity is the foundation for implementing all the other strategies in the CEDS, implementation of this strategy is a priority for the near term. Creating the Economic Development Committee and hiring an Economic Development Director are the most pressing first steps, but work to rebuild the Business and Industrial Park Association and expand GNCC capacity should also begin soon.

## STRATEGY COMPONENTS AND MAIN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

1.1

### Hire a full-time City Economic Development Director

This new position will provide the core staff resource to coordinate CEDS implementation and drive key economic development benefits to the city. Key responsibilities for the new position include:

- Oversee day-to-day implementation of the CEDS, and serve as the point person for many of the below action items;
- Coordinate existing resources and support for small businesses;
- Serve as a resource and liaison to businesses and entrepreneurs in navigating City licensing, permitting and other regulatory processes;
- Serve as another resource in addressing the City's interest in developing more housing;
- Develop relationships with state and regional economic development agencies and programs and help the City and businesses access them; and
- Lead implementation of multiple CEDS initiatives (e.g., business outreach, economic development marketing, updating city business regulations and web information, etc.) and support implementation of others (e.g., small business grant program and business competition, industry workforce recruitment, unified branding and marketing, etc.).

Newburyport will gain multiple benefits from creating this position and the associated capacity to implement the CEDS:

- Maintaining Newburyport's economic diversity and character;

- Increasing the start-up, growth, and survival rate of small businesses;
- Better utilizing the city's land resources aligned with City goals and desired uses;
- Expanding the City property, meals, and lodging tax base and revenue; and
- Advancing City climate and resiliency goals to help protect destinations and spaces central to the city's image and economy, and providing a healthier environment for residents, workers, and visitors.

Implementation requires City appropriation of funds for the new position, creating the position with the City HR system, and completing the hiring process.

## 1.2 Create a cross-sector Economic Development Committee

This component establishes an entity accountable to the City to oversee CEDS implementation. The new Economic Development Committee would be appointed by the Mayor and include representation of key sectors of the city economy and key organizations responsible for CEDS implementation, including the GNCC, umbrella arts & cultural organization, Anna Jacques Hospital, and local banks. Additional subcommittees or working groups might be established in conjunction with the lead organization to implement specific strategy components.

Implementation requires recruitment and appointment of the committee through the Mayor's Office.

While the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce currently has an Economic Development Action Committee that has similar responsibilities, we think this additional committee that is specifically designated to carry out this plan would be a strong addition to the local capacity. EDAC will still be able to speak for the needs of the local businesses and this additional committee will be tasked with implementing the CEDS.

## 1.3 Revive the Business and Industrial Park Association

The Business and Industrial Park Association (BIPA) once played a vital role in developing and promoting Newburyport's Business and Industrial Park but has become inactive. Reviving this organization will provide two valuable functions for businesses in the park: (1) a structure to undertake joint activities that address common needs of firms; and (2) a unified voice to work with the City to address issues

facing the park and its businesses. Since the city's manufacturing and industrial firms are concentrated in the park, the first function allows firms in this sector to collaborate around common needs such as workforce development. The second function has ongoing value to park businesses and the city, and is especially important as the City looks to update zoning and infrastructure needs for the park. While the businesses themselves will need to do much of the work in building and maintaining this structure and organizing the different activities, the Economic Development Director can play a role as a convener and initial organizer.

Key implementation steps include:

- Identify businesses in the park that are interested in reviving the association to lead the revival work;
- Conduct one-on-one outreach to businesses in the park to explain the purpose and value of reviving the association, get feedback on what activities businesses would like the association to undertake and how it should be structured; and confirm interest in participating in a revived association;
- Define a proposed association mission, activities, and structure based on results from the one-on-one meetings; and
- Convene meetings to finalize plans for the association and form a leadership group and working committees per the agreed upon activities and structure.

## 1.4 Expand the GNCC capacity as a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)

Establishing stronger branding and unified marketing for Newburyport as a visitor destination and center for arts, cultural, and historic activities is needed for the city to better capitalize on its assets and this market opportunity. Since the GNCC is already active in marketing Newburyport to visitors and performs many activities typical of DMOs, it is best positioned to address this need. However, the GNCC needs more resources and capacity to implement the unified marketing strategy, including bringing together and aligning stakeholders on common branding and a unified marketing effort, creating the unified marketing infrastructure (visitor website, event/activity calendar, maps and themed narratives/experiences), preparing accessible information and materials, and building the capacity to track the impact of different marketing campaigns and tools. A key part of building this capacity will be creating a funding plan based on one or both of the tools discussed earlier. It will also require an



expanded liaison role with City and private efforts that involve the visitor economy (e.g., historic trails, public art initiatives and publicity, wayfinding, etc.).

Key implementation steps include:

- Confirm board and membership support for the GNCC expanding its role and capacity as a DMO;
- Form an advisory board to oversee and support DMO activities that is representative of all the key visitor-serving sectors (arts/cultural/historic organizations, restaurants, parks & recreation destinations, lodging, retailers, and other visitor destinations) and include the City Economic Development Director and Arts & Cultural Liaison;
- Formulate a funding plan and secure stakeholder buy-in for the plan;
- Work with the advisory board and stakeholders to implement the funding plan; and
- Deploy new funding to hire staff and consultants.

Key implementation steps are:

- Conduct outreach to target state and regional organizations;
- Identify services and resources that align with specific CEDS initiatives;
- Work with target organizations to access resources and support implementation; and
- Maintain ongoing relationships and communications.

## **1.5 Strengthen relationships with, and increase utilization of, state and regional organizations and resources**

As noted in the SWOT analysis, Newburyport has access to a strong ecosystem of state and regional organizations and resources for economic development. Stakeholders have existing working relationships with several of these organizations. However, bolstering connections with these organizations will allow the city and local stakeholders to better utilize their resources to implement the CEDS and advance economic development goals. There are also many regional and state organizations working on providing resources around housing that the City should strengthen its relationships with. Organizations to target for building and maintaining relationships include the Essex Community Foundation, MassDevelopment, MassHousing, Mass Housing Partnership, Massachusetts Office of Business Development, MassHire North Shore Workforce Board, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, Merrimack Valley Transportation Agency, Northern Essex Community College, North of Boston Conventional and Visitors Bureau, the regional Small Business Development Center, Salem Enterprise Center and Whittier Tech High School.

## #2 SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Newburyport's economy is built upon small businesses and independently-owned businesses. Small businesses face many challenges to their start-up, survival, and ongoing growth. There are many positive aspects of the city's support ecosystem for small businesses, including the availability of local bank financing, strong community support and patronage for local businesses, and the advocacy, events, marketing and other services provided by the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC). However, small businesses in Newburyport face many challenges to their continued success, including high commercial rents, difficulty in recruiting and retaining workers, challenges to understanding and navigating City requirements and regulations, and uncertainty or inconsistency in how some regulations are interpreted and administered. Given the importance of small businesses to the city economy and the importance of independent businesses to Newburyport's character and identity, this strategy is a proactive and multifaceted approach to address these challenges, strengthen the city's small business support ecosystem, and enhance its image as a business-friendly city.

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy comprises the following six components:

1. Designate the Economic Development Director to coordinate small business support;
2. Improve City online information;
3. Create a small business grant program;
4. Create an annual business competition;
5. Develop a business outreach program; and
6. Implement regulatory and policy changes to facilitate small business start-up and growth.

### IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS

The City, through a new Economic Development Director, would oversee this strategy and lead implementation of most of its components, working closely with other City staff, the GNCC, and regional assistance providers, including SCORE, the SBDC, and the Salem Enterprise Center. The GNCC would lead implementation of the small business grant program and the small business competition, collaborating with local banks, the Economic Development Director, and the SBDC.

### FUNDING NEEDS AND OPTIONS

This strategy will primarily be implemented through the Economic Development Director along with other existing City staff, existing staff at GNCC, local banks, and regional small business development organizations and volunteers. There are two new funding needs (beyond City funding of the Economic Development Director):

- Initial and on-going capital for the small business grant program; and



- Funding and donations for the competition prizes and promotion of the competition.

Potential funding sources to address these needs include:

- Grants or a new allocation of capital from the GNCC Foundation;
- Grants through local bank foundations, particularly Newburyport Bank, the Newburyport Institution for Savings, and foundations at regional banks and national banks active in the region with a strong focus on small business lending and support, such as Citizen’s Bank, Eastern Bank, Bank of America, and Chase Bank; and
- Business and corporate donations, including sponsorships for the business plan competition.

## PHASING

Implementation of this strategy should begin in the near term, once the Economic Development Director is hired, with most aspects of small business support constituting an ongoing activity of the City, the GNCC, and business support ecosystem. Full implementation of the new programs and regulatory improvements can be completed in the medium term within two to three years. Proposed phasing of this strategy is:

- Near Term: Designate Economic Development Director as small business support coordinator; improve City online information.
- Medium Term: Launch the small business grant program and business competition; implement the small business outreach program; implement regulatory and policy changes.

## STRATEGY COMPONENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

### 2.1 Designate City Economic Development Director to Coordinate Small Business Support

The new Economic Development Director can play a vital role in coordinating existing resources and support for small businesses, and working to fill gaps in the local ecosystem. In this role, the

Economic Development Director should be charged with supporting small businesses in several ways:

- Becoming familiar with federal, state, and regional small business development programs and resources and serving as a “one-stop” source of information and referrals;

- Serving as a resource to help entrepreneurs understand local regulations and licensing requirements to start a business, expand their business, and address City-regulations;
- Consider providing technical assistance from the City for issues that are facing business owners;
- Being a liaison to other City departments to assist in resolving problems and coordinating needed actions or decisions across departments;
- Identifying grant opportunities that can benefit small businesses and preparing grant applications to help access these funds; and
- Assisting the GNCC in implementing the small business grant program and small business competition.

### 2.2 Improve City online information

The City’s website is an under-utilized resource to provide information and guidance to entrepreneurs seeking to start a business, as well as to existing businesses. This strategy component will improve the City government’s online information and resources for entrepreneurs and existing businesses by:

- Revamping the City’s business home page to be more informative and user-friendly, including links to key business support and development organizations and resources;
- Creating digital guides on how to start and open different common types of small businesses (retail stores, restaurants, professional service firms, construction contractors, etc.) and make them available on the business home page and/or a new economic development web page.

Key implementation steps are:

- Meet with the City IT Director to discuss the project, determine the process and what will be needed to update the web page, and set a timeline;
- Hold focus groups with small business owners (including those who recently opened in Newburyport) to learn what information and resources would be helpful to include on a revamped business website and start-up guides;
- Scan business websites in comparable cities to identify examples and ideas for well-designed sites and business start-up guides;
- Determine business types and content outline for guides plus a schedule for their preparation;

- Collect information from City departments on the requirements to open each type of business;
- Prepare draft guides and circulate for review by City staff, business advisors, and small business focus group;
- Develop the content and design for the new web page and prepare a beta version to test and review with the small business focus group and others; and
- Finalize and publicize new business website and guides.

### 2.3 Create a small business grant program

This program will provide financial support for start-up and early-stage businesses to reduce the cost barrier to establish a new small business and accelerate new business creation and success. It would be organized under the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce Foundation and administered by the GNCC with support by the City Economic Development Director and a volunteer grant review committee. Funding for the grant capital can be raised from a combination of grants from the Chamber Foundation, local bank foundations, corporate and individual donations, and the City government. Key implementation steps are:

- Confirm interest of the GNCC and its Foundation in establishing the program and providing initial funding;
- Design the program, including the definition of small businesses eligible for grants, and raise grant capital;
- Meet with local banks and with City elected officials to gauge their interest in providing funding;
- Complete preliminary program design and review with local small businesses and other stakeholders;
- Secure funding from local and regional bank foundations, corporate donations, and City government, per results on earlier meetings;
- Finalize program design, application materials, and grant agreements;
- Launch first grant application/award round; continue annually; and
- Publicize the program and outcomes in economic development outreach materials.

### 2.4 Establish an annual business plan competition

An annual business plan competition promotes entrepreneurship, seeds new businesses, and generates broader community interest in, and support for, new local businesses. This competition would be organized as a partnership between the GNCC and local banks, and use the regional SCORE and SBDC as resources to help entrepreneurs create their business concepts and plan. The competition will need to be actively promoted to generate awareness and gain participation by aspiring entrepreneurs. The process of reviewing proposed businesses and deciding on winners could include public pitch contests in which entrepreneurs present their business concepts to the public to get feedback on their plans and generate local interest in potential businesses, with attendees voting on their preferred business plans. Depending on the level of interest, funding, and local goals, the competition might expand to include more than one category, e.g., overall new business, youth-owned business, women-owned business, BIPOC-owned business, or green business. Key implementation steps:

- Recruit SCORE, the regional SBDC office, and other volunteers with relevant expertise to serve as advisors to entrepreneurs in creating their business plans;
- Secure sponsorships and other funds to provide prizes and cover other costs for the competition;
- Research business competitions in other small cities;
- Design competition process and schedule, including publicity, registration/resource referral, business plan submission; reviewing/judging, and awards;
- Launch first competition;
- Review lessons from first competition and make adjustments as needed; and
- Publicize the competition and outcomes in economic development outreach materials.

### 2.5 Develop a business outreach program

This program will contact existing businesses regularly to discuss their plans and needs, connect them with resources/services to address these needs, and identify broader business concerns that the City might need to address. Outreach visits would be used to: inform firms of the City and regional economic development services; learn about any problems, needs, or challenges firms are



facing; and strengthen relationships between the City, especially its new Economic Development Director and the business community. The visits would be made by the Economic Development Director and trained volunteers. Since it is impractical to visit each business annually, visitation priorities each year would be set based on reaching diverse industries, newly established firms, and businesses that may be considering relocation or faced with special challenges. A reasonable goal would be to connect with businesses every two years, conducting between five and ten visits on average per week. The Economic Development Director would follow-up after the visit to connect firms to resources to address any identified needs and provide guidance related to on-site expansion issues or finding new space in Newburyport. Key implementation steps are:

- Design the outreach visit protocol and process;
- Recruit and train volunteers to assist with outreach visits;
- Schedule and conduct regular visits to businesses;
- Follow up with businesses needing additional information, services, assistance, or guidance as identified during visits; and
- Convene quarterly or semi-annual meetings of visitation “staff” to discuss any emerging trends or common issues emerging from the visits that may require broader action.

## 2.6 Implement regulatory and policy changes

City regulations and their administration have a significant impact on small businesses by setting requirements to open a business and rules for various aspects of operations and property improvements. Regulations and policies enable activities and consumer access that enhance business success but also can impose costs and delays that pose barriers to business start-up and viability. For example, the temporary outdoor dining regulations established during the Covid-19 pandemic were critical to helping restaurants adapt to the pandemic and survive. On the other hand, small business owners raised concerns about the financial burden to pay the \$7,500 per space fee for unmet parking spaces required for new uses under Section 7 of the City’s zoning ordinance, which can significantly add to the cost to open a new business, especially a restaurant. A second problem cited is the inconsistent administration of some regulations, especially when City staff have to interpret how regulations are applied. The following changes to

City regulations and policies are recommended to improve the environment for small businesses:

- Consider adjusting payment of the unmet parking fee for new uses to allow payment over a two-year or three-year period to reduce its financial impact on new businesses;
- Amend the zoning ordinance to make the current regulations for outdoor dining permanent and create more attractive and long-lasting infrastructure to define and protect the outdoor dining spaces. Use Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Outdoor Dining and Retail Toolkit for examples of guidelines, dimensional requirements, and considerations to guide process; and
- Develop guidelines to clarify and provide more consistency in how discretionary decisions or interpretations for key business regulations are applied and administrated.

Key implementation steps are:

- Create a City interagency team to review and prepare zoning amendments, guidelines, and other actions to implement these regulatory changes. The team should include representations of the Building, Health, Finance, and Planning & Development departments;
- Review the proposed changes/actions with key stakeholders including relevant City boards, business owners, property owners, designers, engineers, and contractors, etc.;
- Finalize regulatory changes and submit them for approval by governing boards and the City Council; and
- Authorize City capital funding for outdoor dining infrastructure improvements.

## #3 SUPPORT TOURISM AND ARTS & CULTURE BRANDING, MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

Newburyport hosts a wide range of businesses, amenities, and destinations that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The city's historic, pedestrian-oriented downtown has a robust mix of restaurants, independent retailers, and arts, cultural, and historic destinations. In addition, ocean & riverfront uses and attractions, and a regional network of open spaces, natural resources, and abundant green spaces combine to provide a unique destination and amenity-rich city serving residents and the varied interests of visitors.

Within this environment however, there is an absence of a strong city identity and brand to attract visitors, as well as a weak gateway from I-95 that does not express the character of Newburyport. Fragmented marketing and promotions efforts and the absence of hotel/lodging to attract visitors and facilitate longer stays present challenges for cultural destinations that depend on consistent audiences and for all businesses that serve not only residents but visitors. The lack of comprehensive information and wayfinding in the city makes it difficult to find resources, understand what is happening, and navigate available experiences and businesses. The multiple and uncoordinated names for the historic and cultural districts and the various trails with no single visual and descriptive system also create confusion and limit the potential customer base. With coordinated and enhanced branding and marketing, Newburyport can be a stronger North of Boston regional visitor destination for dining, shopping, and arts and cultural activities, supporting businesses and organizations enjoyed by residents and visitors.

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy comprises the following seven components:

1. Create branding for the city that addresses the visitor economy and includes arts, culture and historical destinations and experiences;
2. Create a unified tourism/events/arts & culture website;
3. Create visitor marketing materials and itineraries;
4. Finalize and implement the Wayfinding Plan, including visitor/arts & cultural destinations, cultural district and historic district signs;
5. Review/expand events;
6. Expand the visitor center; and
7. Develop a downtown bike share program.



## IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS

The Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC), which already oversees the main marketing for businesses and destinations in the city, would lead on implementation for most of the elements in this strategy with the City leading on the remaining elements. The GNCC will require support from local businesses, North of Boston, and the City on implementation of most of the elements it will oversee. Collaboration from arts, cultural, historic, and recreational organizations and destinations will be needed in branding and online calendar efforts. A designated Arts & Cultural Liaison in City Hall as well as an Economic Development Director, can ensure seamless coordination and alignment between all marketing and branding efforts.

## FUNDING NEEDS AND OPTIONS

The GNCC's and City's leadership in implementing these strategy elements will require new funding support (beyond City funding of the Economic Development Director and any new staff time needed for an Arts & Cultural Liaison). New funding needs include:

- Initial and on-going staff support for GNCC destination marketing efforts;
- Consultant support for branding and marketing overall strategies;
- Creation and distribution of marketing materials;
- Wayfinding implementation;
- Website design, construction, and ongoing maintenance for activities calendar and one-stop visitor site;
- Capital funding for the new visitor center; and
- Funding for a bike plan feasibility study, implementation of a program.

Potential funding sources to address these needs include:

- Tiered membership structure and the advertising program revenue and increased hotel/motel tax to fund GNCC DMO activities as outlined in Strategy 1.4.
- Capital Fund for new visitor center and wayfinding implementation;
- Massachusetts Cultural Council Cultural District Grants for Cultural District marketing (Cultural District has significant overlap with downtown and with the National Register Historic District); and

- Area health foundations may provide support for a study and implementation of a bike share program. Private investors are another likely source of funding/partnership for a program.

## PHASING

Implementation of select elements of this strategy should begin in the near-term, with most marketing and branding elements underway by the medium term of 2 to 3 years. Longer term capital investments will also be needed. The phasing for these elements is as follows:

- Near Term: Expand the GNCC's capacity to take on additional destination marketing organization (DMO) roles as highlighted under Strategy 1.4; create branding for the city that addresses the visitor economy.
- Medium Term: Create a unified tourism/events/arts & culture website; create visitor marketing materials and itineraries; review/expand events; develop a downtown bike share program.
- Longer Term: Wayfinding implementation; expand the visitor center.

## STRATEGY COMPONENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

### **3.1 Create branding for the city that addresses the visitor economy and includes arts, culture, and historical destinations and experiences**

There is no one brand for the city. Is it about history? Recreation and the natural environment? Arts and culture? The robust selection of independent and unique businesses? Dining? A lack of a brand hampers efforts to attract visitors to Newburyport and was cited as a frustrating situation by many stakeholders. Key implementation steps include:

- Have the Economic Development Director manage the branding efforts and overall marketing strategy, potentially through the assistance of a consultant;
- Develop brand for city and create graphics, logos, and other digital assets and standards for use in all efforts (online/digital, print, City, Chamber, etc.); and
- Develop sub-brands for specific components as needed that fit into the overall strategy.

### 3.2 Create a unified tourism/event/arts & culture website

There is no single-source website for visitors on city attractions and experiences and for residents seeking a comprehensive calendar of activities and events. The current options are dense with visitor, resident, and regional information and have no clear message or brand. A clear, user-friendly website with robust calendar offers the first impression of the city for most visitors and can assist residents searching for local activities. Key implementation steps include:

- Oversee the creation of a website, either internally, through a consultant, or through local community members with the skills;
- Work with consultant to develop goals for website and overall framework. Use branding efforts to determine the overall design of the site and incorporate search engine optimizations tools to drive the new website to top search results;
- Develop a system for keeping an up-to-date visitor calendar of events, performances, etc. Work closely with city destinations to create a system for populating calendar that is the most cost and time-effective;
- Beta-test the website and calendar population features; and
- Launch website.

### 3.3 Create visitor marketing materials and itineraries

The multiple facets of Newburyport offer opportunities to appeal to a variety of interests, encourage longer stays, and bring more visibility to local businesses. These facets are currently uncoordinated and many are almost invisible to residents and visitors. The downtown Cultural District has no signage, there are no maps that show the Historic District, the Clipper Heritage Tours, and walking and bike paths. Public art locations are not mapped to show their relationship to all the other destinations in the city. Visitor marketing materials outlining the many possible experiences and offering various special-interest itineraries are needed to fully showcase the offerings of Newburyport. Key implementation steps include:

- Develop a range of narratives or itineraries for visitors (public art, the port, historic buildings, foodie experiences, etc.);

- Work with Clipper Heritage Trail, Clipper City Rail Trail, Harborwalk, and other destinations to create an integrated route map showing range of experiences and walks, parking, and transportation networks. Include Historic and Cultural Districts;
- Coordinate with wayfinding plan to integrate narratives and districts/trails into overall signage and maps throughout the city; and
- Create a range of digital and print assets for visitors and residents.

### 3.4 Finalize and implement the Wayfinding Plan including visitor/arts & cultural destinations, Cultural District, and Historic District Signs

The draft Wayfinding Plan offers a framework for the City to improve signage for visitors and residents. Better wayfinding to parking, demarcation of the Cultural and Historic Districts, destination signage, and better signage from Interstate-95 to the downtown are just some of the needs of the city. Wayfinding should reflect a single brand and graphic style for the city and comprehensive implementation can help limit resident and visitor frustration while potentially reducing traffic congestion and increasing visibility of businesses and cultural and recreational attractions. Key implementation steps include:

- Review draft Wayfinding Plan and identify areas that require updates based on tourism branding efforts, the need for better parking signage and maps, and clarity required for the various districts (Historic, Cultural), historic and art routes in the city and highlighting climate and resiliency themes;
- Update Wayfinding Plan and finalize; and
- Allocate City capital funding for wayfinding and implement plan.

### 3.5 Review/expand events

Newburyport is the location for multiple events throughout the year. An assessment of the location, size, and interest area of events can identify opportunities to spread events throughout the year and in varied locations to highlight local businesses and support the economy during the slow tourism months. It also can identify changes to existing events or new events that reinforce the new branding and itineraries. An assessment of local business impacts could yield new opportunities to include businesses in events and to ensure there are positive impacts for revenue on event days. The



GNCC would be the best lead entity for this work.

Key implementation steps include:

- Using list in CEDS as a start, review comprehensive list of events in city, including season, market characteristics of attendees, and location. Add and update information as necessary;
- Develop a list of goals for events (increase visitor economy, stretch tourist shoulder seasons, provide off-season or winter activities, support local businesses, etc.);
- Identify gaps in events according to established goals;
- Survey businesses to understand impacts of events and identify potential ways events can better support local businesses and organizations/destinations;
- Institute changes and/or additions to events to achieve goals (changes in location, framework for business and organizational visibility/participation, enhanced local marketing, etc.); and
- Develop new events or partner with organizations and organizers to broaden offerings, as necessary.

### 3.6 Expand the visitor center

The current waterfront visitor center consists of bathroom facilities and a small information kiosk. The location of this structure is ideal in terms of visibility, convenience to parking, and adjacency to downtown but it provides a minimum of visitor information and amenities. As the City reviews options for modernizing and expanding the visitor center, consideration should be given to providing a full-service indoor space for staff/volunteers, visitor materials, and improved bathroom facilities. Key implementation steps include:

- Review visitor facilities in comparable towns and cities to understand existing expectations and standards in similar markets. Consider Salem, MA; Plymouth, MA; Portsmouth, NH and Gloucester, MA as a start;
- Discuss options and potential constraints;
- Coordinate efforts with the Wayfinding Plan, Umbrella Arts & Cultural Organization for public art possibilities, and regional trails and marketing efforts for signage and maps;

- Develop a cost estimate for new visitor facilities, including staff/volunteer needs; and
- Allocate funding for center, implement design and construction plan.

### 3.7 Develop a downtown bikeshare program

Bikeshare programs can significantly contribute to enhanced mobility in cities. In Newburyport, the commuter rail and Clipper City Rail Trail offer an excellent opportunity to use bikeshare as a way to solve the first-last mile challenge, as well as replacing short car trips and providing an alternative mode of transportation for visitors and residents. Consideration for e-bikes can help broaden the appeal to a wider demographic of users and bikeshare can help reduce congestion and parking demand in downtown, particularly during the height of visitor season. Key implementation steps include:

- Conduct a community survey gauging interest in a bikeshare program including e-bike availability. Include intercept surveys of visitors to gauge interest. Ask residents and visitors how they would use the system and potential barriers to participation;
- Conduct outreach to area health foundations to explore interest in providing support and grants;
- Evaluate and identify opportunities for system integration of bikeshare facilities within overall transportation network of Newburyport and region (other bikeshare programs in adjacent communities, first and last mile options for commuters, etc.);
- Determine goals and metrics to measure progress for a city bikeshare program;
- Issue a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for private bikeshare companies/investors;
- Begin planning the system (service area, size, bikeshare type);
- Develop financial model; and
- Implement system.

# #4

## ARTS, CULTURAL & HISTORIC ASSETS

Newburyport is home to a varied and active arts and cultural community of for profit and nonprofit businesses, individual practitioners and significant historic assets and natural resources. Together, the range of experiences and destinations, from historic buildings and landscapes, to performing and visual arts, to beaches, forests, and other natural areas, offer residents and visitors unique opportunities. However, small groups of artists, cultural and historic institutions, natural resource and recreation entities all currently conduct separate marketing efforts and are competing for the same customer and donor base. Collaboration efforts have increased since the Covid-19 pandemic but these initiatives are limited in scope and there is no one central advocacy voice. Improving the coordination and marketing between sectors may help increase audiences and customers, and allow visitors, businesses, and city residents to fully connect with, and experience, what is available within Newburyport. The City can also undertake specific efforts to support the arts, culture, historic, and nature/recreation communities, including determining the extent of the concerns about space availability and costs and reducing the complexity of the permitting/licensing processes for programs and events that enliven the city.

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy comprises the following five components:

1. Designate an Arts & Cultural Liaison in City Hall;
2. Identify an existing or new group to serve as an umbrella advocacy and collaboration organization to represent all arts, cultural, and historic organizations and destinations;
3. Conduct a space supply and demand survey;
4. Develop criteria/goals to support local businesses and destinations during festivals & events; and
5. Streamline alcohol licensing, assembly, and events permitting.



## IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS

The City of Newburyport Mayor's Office is the lead implementation organization for three of the five strategies. Considering the designated Arts & Cultural Liaison may be located in the Mayor's Office, coordination for strategies related to City staff and boards/committees, facilities, and policies, regulations, and processes lends itself to a central office for oversight. One of the strategies will rely on the arts, culture, and historic organizations collectively working on establishing a representative umbrella organization, and the remaining strategy may be led by the Great Newburyport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC) to create collaborative efforts between the arts, culture, and historic groups and businesses.

## FUNDING NEEDS AND OPTIONS

Required funding resources to implement this strategy are twofold: for City-led strategies, most but not all of the funding needed is through allotted staff time; the other two strategies will initially require volunteer time and GNCC staff time. Potential funding sources to address these needs include:

- City General Fund for the initial consultant to create and populate the space supply database and conduct the space demand survey. This is a one-time cost, although the database and information will need to be maintained with periodic updates;
- Public or private foundation grants may be available if the umbrella arts & cultural organization decides to become an official and separate nonprofit organization; and
- Membership fees and event revenue can help fund an arts, culture, and history umbrella advocacy group although the potential for overlap of purpose with existing member organizations in the city makes this funding strategy less appealing.

## PHASING

Creating a coordinated support structure for arts, culture, historic, and natural resources in the city will be an ongoing effort with much of the start-up work beginning in the near term. Some of the work may begin immediately, with other work dependent on staffing capacity, as follows:

- Near Term: Designating a City Arts & Cultural Liaison; identify an umbrella group for arts, culture, and historic resources advocacy and coordination; develop criteria and goals for festivals and events to improve two-

way benefits with the local businesses; and streamline permitting and licensing processes.

- Medium Term: conduct space supply and demand survey.
- Longer Term: creating a professionally staffed nonprofit arts and cultural advocacy organization.

## STRATEGY COMPONENTS AND MAIN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

### 4.1 Designate an Arts & Cultural Liaison in City Hall

While Newburyport has been home to many artists and arts, culture, and historic organizations and institutions, the City's current official connection to that community is through the Cultural Council. While the Newburyport Cultural Council has been distributing the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Local Cultural Council Program grants to arts and cultural organizations, it is a volunteer group whose mission is to direct funds for the program. The community has expressed a need to have a designated staff person as Liaison to address needs and help coordinate with City initiatives. The Arts and Cultural Liaison could be part of the responsibilities of the Economic Development Director. The role of the Liaison would be to:

- Act as the key City point person for arts, cultural, and historic nonprofits and related businesses;
- Coordinate with other City staff on special projects and events (licensing and permitting needs);
- Serve on ad hoc or standing committees regarding: arts, cultural, and historic issues and initiatives; visitor/tourism initiatives; and overall marketing and branding; and
- Offer guidance on grant applications that require City letters of support/collaboration.

Key implementation action steps to designate a Liaison include:

- Convene a meeting of arts, culture, historic stakeholders to discuss their needs and potential roles of the Liaison;
- Develop clear job description and roles;
- Designate a City staff person to be the Liaison; and
- Announce Liaison position with information on roles to the community.

**4.2****Identify an existing or new group to serve as an umbrella advocacy and collaboration organization to represent all arts, cultural, and historic organizations and destinations**

During the CEDS planning process, artists as well as arts, culture, and historic nonprofit organizations noted that most of their collaborative work and coordination with each other on events and programs is informal in nature. The Newburyport Arts Collective (NAC), which includes the Newburyport Art Association and Firehouse Center for the Arts among its members, was formed during the Covid-19 pandemic as a vehicle to advocate for these organizations and individual artists. However, NAC is supported by volunteer efforts and uses a regional nonprofit as its fiscal agent, and there does not appear to be the capacity at this time to create a registered nonprofit organization with paid staff. There is concern that the volunteer nature of this group makes it unsustainable in the long run while there is an ongoing need for an umbrella/advocacy group with paid staff to coordinate efforts, apply for grants, and be a voice for these organizations and artists in larger initiatives. This strategy element has near and long term actions that recognize the arts, culture, and historic sector should have a cohesive and unified voice to advocate for the community but that formal organization is not possible at this time. Key implementation action steps include:

- Convene current members of the NAC as well as other groups, creatives, and organizations to review the work of the NAC and create an updated goals statement. Use the Spring 2022 Cultural Council Forum outcomes and the analyses presented in this study as a starting point;
- Determine how NAC can continue as the advocacy group for Newburyport arts, culture, and historic stakeholders including:

**Near Term:**

- » Review and revise, if applicable, mission statement;
- » Articulate near and medium term goals;
- » Determine Leadership (City Liaison should be included in some way);
- » Determine how representation will be provided for other CEDS implementation elements including branding, creating marketing materials and itineraries for visitors, maps of experiences, and wayfinding;
- » Identify assistance needed from City, GNCC, etc.;

- » Reaffirm choice of an outside fiscal agent for the near term; and
- » Advocate for City funding to develop itineraries and arts, culture, historic experiences (consultant(s) needed for itinerary development, graphics, etc., which could be an existing stakeholder or local expert).

**Longer Term Actions:**

- » Explore interest and capacity to create a formal Newburyport Arts, Culture, and Historic nonprofit with paid staff. Multiple models exist for funding these organizations. Its expanded roles could include:
  - Assist in coordination between artists, nonprofit groups, institutions, and businesses to more effectively use limited resources;
  - Pursue grants with City and other funders support to organization, planning, programs, and events;
  - Update and influence visitor experiences and itineraries;
  - Provide representation for members with City and GNCC in all planning efforts;
  - Build a connection with the Essex County Community Foundation, which could also be engaged as a funding partner for some of this work;
  - Collaborate with education institutions for programming and continuing education;
  - Collaborate with the Cultural Council to increase grants to local creatives and organizations;
  - Convene an annual or bi-annual summit; and
  - Program events and activities (and use revenue as a funding source).



### 4.3 Conduct a space supply and demand survey

One of the key issues raised by artists and cultural and historic groups is the lack of affordable space – for working, creating, displaying, practicing, and performing. Newburyport has low vacancy in commercial spaces, and the rents for these spaces have been rising. Anecdotal information indicates that artists and nonprofit organizations have been moving out of Newburyport, some specifically to Amesbury where there is more available space at lower costs and a welcoming local government. At the same time, there appear to be spaces that may be available because they are not used full time or are underutilized. These spaces, some of which may be in religious and historic buildings in the downtown, could provide much-needed space for arts and cultural activities while providing revenue to property owners. A survey to identify both demand for space and the available supply, and to explore challenges for property owners to rent and manage these spaces, can help unlock the potential to infuse arts and culture throughout the downtown and city. Unlocking these spaces will provide a network of activity and community connections to benefit all. The survey can result in a database of need and supply, and potential assistance for property owners in the leasing process. The Economic Development Director would be the natural person to take on these responsibilities. Key implementation action steps include:

- Allocate funding or City staff time to create an online space supply and demand survey. Use examples from other municipalities (Newton, MA conducted a survey in 2018) as a guide to simplify the effort. The survey should include questions regarding space size, times available if not full-time, sound restrictions, loading areas, natural light, electrical capacity if an issue, parking availability, etc.;
- Conduct a campaign to notify stakeholders of the pending survey with outreach through: existing arts, cultural, and historic organizations; contact lists of property owners including religious organizations, schools, nonprofits, etc.; City email blasts and listservs; and other methods;
- Distribute survey link and allow at least four weeks for responses and send reminders to all stakeholders listed above;

- Analyze results to determine three things:
  - Demand for space;
  - Possible supply of space; and
  - Challenges anticipated by property owners.
- Create and maintain a database of space supply including detailed characteristics;
- Consider creating guidelines for property owners that could include a sample lease agreement and liability release, tips on managing and programming space, assistance on pricing, and examples from other places with contact information;
- Create a list of arts/culture/historical organizations/individuals seeking space to facilitate matches and reduce vacant/underutilized spaces; and
- Market or make available the database to enhance the city's image as a welcoming place for arts, culture, history.

### 4.4 Develop criteria/goals to support local businesses and destinations during festivals and events

Festivals and large events in the city draw visitors and offer opportunities to support local businesses and arts/cultural/historic destinations. However, some events can draw custom away from businesses and venues when they are large, because they create disincentives for residents and others to shop locally due to crowds and the loss of available parking. Coordination between the GNCC, event organizers, the new City Arts & Cultural Liaison, and local businesses can help identify opportunities to increase visibility and customers for local businesses and organizations and offer incentives for repeat visits to the city.

Once residents or visitors are attending an arts or movie festival, farmer's market, or other event, both sectors should discuss and create guidelines to draw those attendees from one local activity to another local destination. By creating opportunities, either through advertising or providing special offers for those who combine shopping, dining, visiting museums, or seeing a show, for example, during their time in Newburyport, it is possible to

increase visibility, attendance and local spending. Key implementation action steps include:

- Survey businesses and organizations to determine past successes with events providing increased customer/audience base and perceived challenges presented by events;
- Use the survey to collaboratively develop goals and guidelines for festivals and events to better increase visibility and sales for local businesses and drive visitors and customers to arts/culture/historic venues/sites;
- Create a mechanism to measure results, draw return customers and receive ongoing feedback from local businesses and organizations; and
- Create ways to incorporate guidelines into discussions with event organizers and determine City/GNCC representation in planning events.

#### **4.5 Streamline alcohol licensing, assembly, and events permitting**

Arts, culture, historic, and nature/recreation programs and events enliven the city and improve its quality of life. Stakeholders indicated that the time spent navigating permitting and licensing processes and the fees required to host events are frustrating and costly, particularly for small businesses and nonprofits that have limited staff capacity to navigate the processes and attend licensing meetings. The City can encourage events and activities that provide life to downtown and in public spaces and support businesses and organizations, particularly during the shoulder seasons, by providing a clear permitting and licensing process/path for those looking to host events. In addition, codifying and making permanent outdoor dining in the city can standardize expectations and lower costs and time delays for restaurants while streamlining processes for City staff. This effort will require cross-departmental cooperation and coordination and should be led by the Mayor's Office, City Clerk, or the Office of Planning and Development. Key implementation action steps include:

- Designate lead/project manager in City Hall to coordinate this effort. A consultant may be needed to provide support;
- Examine similar streamlining efforts in other municipalities to help guide the process and simplify efforts, e.g., Fall River embarked on a similar effort in January 2022;
- Create a list of challenges for businesses and organizations as well as for City departments by surveying each and using information in the CEDS as a starting point;

- Convene all departments involved in the following permitting and licensing requirements:
  - Events and festivals; and
  - Alcohol licensing;
- Use meetings to develop potential methods for streamlining processes including the designation of a lead City contact or coordinator for permitting and licensing;
- Create process charts and checklists to help align expectations across City Departments and event organizers/organizations/businesses; and
- Consider simplified permitting for single events (one-day licenses), particularly for small-scale, and/or a mechanism for specified multi-event licenses, e.g., three events for a single organization/business either on specific dates or within a three or four-month window.



Newburyport is almost fully developed with limited buildable vacant land to support new development needed for business growth and to address pressing community housing needs. To address future needs, Newburyport increasingly will need to rely on infill development and redevelopment in existing business districts. Moreover, the diversity of the city's economy generates demand for multiple real estate types including industrial space, professional office space, medical offices, and ground floor space for retail and service businesses at a broader range of rents, as well as affordable space for artists and arts and cultural organizations. While future development will be impacted by the regional real estate market and the willingness and interest of existing property owners to undertake projects, Newburyport can undertake several planning and zoning actions to shape and facilitate future development that aligns with economic development and community goals. These efforts are primarily focused on three strategic areas with the greatest development potential: (1) the Business and Industrial Park; (2) Storey Avenue; and (3) the Waterfront West site.

## STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy comprises the following five components to shape development at four key districts and sites and market Newburyport to attract businesses:

1. Update zoning for the Business and Industrial Park;
2. Promote Storey Avenue mixed-use redevelopment;
3. Support Waterfront West development;
4. Encourage planning for reuse of the C & J Transportation site;
5. Attract hotel development;
6. Create a housing development strategy; and
7. Actively market Newburyport as a business and economic development location.

## IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS

The City of Newburyport Office of Planning & Development is the lead implementation department since this strategy primarily entails development planning and zoning changes. The Office of Planning & Development will need to work closely with property owners in each district as well as area businesses, residents, and other stakeholders to formulate plans and revised zoning, as well as with the Planning Board and other City departments. A new Economic Development Director will lead the marketing effort, working with the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC), commercial real estate brokers and property owners, and the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission.

## FUNDING NEEDS AND OPTIONS

Required funding to implement this strategy is twofold: (1) consultant services to support planning for some districts, especially Storey Avenue; and (2) infrastructure investment needed to support district development plans. Several state grant programs are available to help fund these activities, including:

- Community Planning Grant Program provides grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000 to support local planning and zoning revisions;
- MassDevelopment Site Readiness Program for site planning, site preparation and predevelopment activities to increase the state's supply of well-located sites and accelerate private-sector investment in industrial, commercial, and mixed-use projects. Most grants range from \$50,000 to \$500,000;
- MassDevelopment Real Estate Services Program provides technical assistance via the agency's staff and its "house doctor" consultants to address site-specific and/or district-wide economic development challenges; and
- MassWorks Infrastructure Program is a flexible grant program for municipalities and other public entities to help fund public infrastructure investments needed to support housing development or job creation through private investment and economic development projects. Grants range from several hundred thousand to several million dollars.

Newburyport can also use financing tools authorized under state law, that utilize increased tax revenues from new development to fund infrastructure, incentivize investment, or address other needs. These tools include the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), District Improvement Financing (DIF), and the Infrastructure

Investment Incentive Program (I-Cubed). Newburyport is currently conducting a feasibility study on the use of DIF to finance infrastructure improvements for the Waterfront West district.

## PHASING

Expanding Newburyport's real estate supply is an ongoing effort and will occur over many years. However, the planning and zoning changes to facilitate this development can occur in the near to medium term with the phasing of this work tied to the complexity of the work and readiness of each area for development, as follows:

- Near Term: Work on the Waterfront West district and the Business and Industrial Park can begin in year one, with the goal of putting zoning revisions in place within two years; begin steps necessary to attract hotel development.
- Medium Term: Given the scope and complexity of planning for Storey Area and the need to secure funding and engage stakeholders in the effort, this is a medium term project that might begin in year two and with the district vision, plan, and zoning recommendations completed in year three.
- Medium Term: Creating and implementing plans to market Newburyport as a business location can begin in the second half of year two once an Economic Development Director is hired, the overall branding of Newburyport is complete, an inventory of available space is prepared, and the nature of rezoning for Waterfront West and the Business and Industrial Park is clearer.
- Longer Term: While outreach to state officials to determine reuse issues and potential for the C & J site can begin in year one, it is likely to take several years to gain the legal changes necessary to make the site available for reuse and complete local plans.

## STRATEGY COMPONENTS AND MAIN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

5.1

### Update Zoning for the Business and Industrial Park

There is broad consensus that the existing zoning for the Business and Industrial Park is outdated and needs to be revised to allow higher density multi-story buildings and more non-industrial uses without a special permit, reflecting the diverse uses that already exist and are desirable for the community (e.g., medical offices, gyms/recreation, etc.). Revised zoning should include requirements

for sidewalks, landscaping, and other infrastructure to create better connections within the park and to adjacent areas for improved pedestrian and bicycle safety as well as what zoning changes and pedestrian improvements are appropriate for the entire park and which ones need to vary for different sub-areas within the park. Zoning updates should also assess and reflect whether Newburyport has sufficient water and sewer capacity to support any new development allowed under revised zoning. Key implementation action steps include:

- Create an advisory committee with park businesses and property owners and stakeholders in adjacent neighborhoods to work with the Office of Planning & Development and Planning Board to review;
- Survey existing conditions within the park and connections with surrounding neighborhoods. As part of this process, the City should consider mapping wetlands in the park to better understand available land and development constraints;
- Obtain input from existing park businesses on their needs and future plans via the advisory committee, surveys and/or listening sessions, and collect information on key real estate market trends;
- Formulate proposed zoning changes based on above information, analysis and stakeholder input and review with the advisory committee; and
- Submit proposed zoning changes for public comment and adoption by the Planning Board and City Council.

### **5.2 Promote mixed-use, pedestrian friendly redevelopment for Storey Avenue**

While there is considerable support for this goal, more planning and analysis is needed to move this general concept into formulation of feasible development scenarios and plans that have broad community support. This would help inform decisions about new zoning and site design guidelines and provide existing property owners or new developers with more predictability about the scale, design, and type of development that would ultimately succeed in gaining City approval. The City could lead a planning process to consider multiple options for future redevelopment of the district and build consensus on the desired mix of uses, overall density, circulation, and incorporation of greenspace and amenities, etc. This analysis should address whether sufficient water and sewer

capacity exists to support development under plan options and include financial feasibility of alternatives so that plans are grounded in market and financial realities with consideration of trade-offs or incentives that may be necessary to achieve desired redevelopment. The final plans would form the basis for new zoning, policies, and guidelines to advance the redevelopment plan. As part of this planning, Newburyport should consider assessing the potential benefits and feasibility of establishing a District Improvement Financing (DIF) area to help finance redevelopment. Key implementation action steps include:

- Develop the scope and secure funding for a Storey Avenue “Vision and Development Plan”;
- Issue a RFP and select a consultant team to support planning process;
- Complete planning process including recommendations for new zoning, development and design guidelines, and use of DIF and incentives needed for redevelopment feasibility;
- Explain and review recommended zoning and policies with the public and key stakeholders; and
- Work with the Planning Board and City Council to adopt the recommended plan, zoning, and related policies and guidelines.

### **5.3 Support Waterfront West Development**

The Waterfront West district is an under-utilized and strategically located site that presents a unique opportunity to address City economic development and housing goals while building a resilient project that can weather potential storms and sea-level rise. While New England Development, as the land owner, needs to decide on a new development program, City officials and other stakeholders can support and advance development by defining economic development goals for development at the site, articulating the desired benefits to the community from future development, and considering what public infrastructure investments and other actions would enhance development plans, mitigate impacts, and strengthen the site’s connection to the downtown and larger waterfront. This work is already underway with the City currently conducting a feasibility study on establishing a District Improvement Financing (DIF) area to help fund site infrastructure. The City, through the Office of Planning & Development, should continue communications with New England Development on its plans for the site and articulate how future site development can advance



economic development goals, mitigate potential negative impacts, and generate desired community benefits. Once New England Development has created a development plan that aligns with City priorities, the development plan will need to be approved by the City along with an associated site infrastructure plan, community benefit/mitigation agreement, and DIF district, if deemed feasible.

#### **5.4 Encourage planning for future reuse of the C & J Transportation site**

This large site is the gateway to Newburyport from Interstate 95 and is no longer in active use following the relocation of C & J Transportation to Seabrook, New Hampshire. Given its size and strategic importance as a key gateway to the city, Newburyport should work to create and implement a plan for its future reuse. This will require working with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and possibly other state and federal agencies, to understand current legal restrictions on its use, gain their support to create a reuse plan, and make the site available for new uses that create greater benefits for the city, state, and other stakeholders. Newburyport should also explore interim uses of the site, such as hosting events and public art installations while the planning for long-term reuse occurs. The initial actions entail engaging with MassDOT and other state officials to determine the existing status and legal use limitations and identify what actions are needed to allow for its reuse. Once a clear pathway and process for reuse is clarified, a process to create a reuse plan can be designed. Key initial implementation steps include:

- Brief Newburyport’s state representative and state senator on the importance of the site to the city and the desire to create a legal pathway and plan for reuse;
- Meet with the city’s legislative delegation and MassDOT to learn of any plans they have for the site, the potential for reuse, and the legal issues and constraints that will need to be addressed for reuse; and
- Formulate next steps to advance reuse planning and provide for interim uses based on what is learned from these initial steps: will reuse involve federal action or does the state government control the site and future uses?; what can be done under the existing site limitations?; what is needed to open up additional options?; are any short-term or interim uses possible?.

#### **5.5 Attract hotel development**

Without one or more hotels that are in or adjacent to downtown and that can handle small to medium conferences, Newburyport is hampered in its ability to attract visitors off-season and to increase its share of extended-stay visits. Extended-stay visitors, on average, spend significantly more than day visitors in the local economy, and hotels can attract events and conferences that can help balance business in the shoulder and off-tourist seasons of late fall through late spring. An Economic Development Director would be able to devote resources to this work. Key implementation steps include:

- Identify near-term sites appropriate for hotel development;
- Work with property owners/developers to ensure City goals are met; and
- Streamline permitting where possible.

#### **5.6 Create a housing development strategy**

Given the importance of housing cost and supply for Newburyport’s future economic development, the City needs to have a comprehensive strategy to foster expanded housing development, including affordable units and more diverse housing options. Newburyport is currently updating its 2018 Housing Production Plan (HPP), and this strategy can be included in that planning process to advance the HPP’s implementation. Complying with the new state requirement for MBTA communities to provide as-of-right zoning for multi-family housing near MBTA stations is an additional layer to be included in the City’s overall housing development strategy. In formulating this strategy, Newburyport can consider several policy and program options to advance diverse housing development that include:

- Expanding the current 40R district;
- Incorporating multi-family and affordable housing in planning and zoning changes for the Storey Avenue district and Waterfront West;
- Updating regulations to expand options and simplify approval process for accessory dwelling units in appropriate neighborhoods;
- Expanding funding sources for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; and
- Utilizing appropriate surplus City-owned property for housing development.

Key implementation action steps include:

- Incorporate a housing development strategy, particularly to increase diversity in price, size, and rental opportunities, into the current scope for the updated HPP;
- Identify and assign new research, analysis and planning tasks for the housing development strategy;
- Formulate and incorporate strategy into the updated HPP.

## **5.7** Actively market Newburyport as a business location

Newburyport does not actively market the city as a business location and site for economic development projects. This places the city at a competitive disadvantage with other communities that actively promote themselves, and may result in missed opportunities to attract new business investment and desired development projects. Under the direction of the new Economic Development Director, Newburyport should begin marketing the city as a business location, working with local property owners and real estate brokers. This will first require articulating the value proposition for locating a business in the city and compiling and presenting information that demonstrates its economic development assets from a business perspective, e.g., its diverse business base, access to a skilled local and regional labor force, good highway access, excellent local amenities and services, etc. This information should also include profiles of a diverse mix of local businesses that highlight how locating in Newburyport has contributed to their success.

Once this core information is in place, additional marketing steps can be implemented including: establishing an economic development page on the City's website; creating and maintaining an up-to-date inventory of available space and sites linked to state and regional site inventories maintained by MassECON and the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission; participating in key regional industry and economic development organizations to increase Newburyport's profile; and directing outreach to state economic development agencies

(Massachusetts Office of Business Development, MassDevelopment) and key business advisors that influence business location decisions (site selection firms, major commercial/industrial brokers, etc.). Key implementation steps include:

- Define Newburyport's value proposition as a business location, compile information that demonstrates its advantages, and prepare brief marketing materials including business profiles;
- Create an inventory of available land, buildings, and space for lease and establish a process for regularly updating this information;
- Create a City economic development website to market the city as a business location that: presents the case for locating in Newburyport; profiles successful businesses; incorporates the available real estate inventory with links to real estate listings; highlights the Economic Development Director as the City contact about locating or initiating an economic development project; and links to other City information on business licensing/start-up and the development permitting process;
- Meet with key state and regional economic development organizations (MOBD, MassDevelopment, MassEcon, MVPC) to make them aware of Newburyport and establish on-going relationships; and
- Identify priority industry associations and business influencers for marketing Newburyport and create Newburyport ambassadors to these organizations and influencers, drawing on existing relationships and memberships among Newburyport businesses, officials, and professionals.

# #6 WORKFORCE ATTRACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

**Newburyport businesses consistently report that finding and retaining employees is a major challenge. Although this challenge exists nationwide, it is particularly important for Newburyport with large parts of its economy in especially hard-hit sectors, including health care and restaurants. Moreover, with more jobs than resident workers and a mismatch between resident occupations and the jobs in many Newburyport businesses, the city is particularly dependent on the region’s workforce to address hiring needs. This strategy seeks to address this critical business need through more proactive efforts to attract regional workers to Newburyport, capitalizing on the strong regional workforce training system, and by working to address housing and transportation barriers to employment.**

## STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy comprises the following four components:

1. Organizing industry-based promotion of Newburyport as place of work;
2. Establishing a fund to support local apprenticeships and internships;
3. Exploring the feasibility of developing workforce housing on the Anna Jacques Hospital campus; and
4. Expanding commuting transportation services and options.

## IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS

A combination of City government and business organizations need to lead implementation of this strategy, with the Economic Development Director coordinating its overall implementation. The Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC) is best-positioned to lead the organization of industry-based workforce attraction efforts and creation of the apprenticeship/internship fund, aided by the revived Business and Industrial Park Association once it is established. Newburyport Bank is a key partner in establishing the apprenticeship/internship fund, as its President serves on the Board of Northern Essex Community College and has a strong interest in expanding funding for apprenticeship education. The City Office of Planning & Development is best positioned to work with Anna Jacques Hospital to assess the feasibility of building workforce

housing on its campus, and, through the Economic Development Director, work with local employers and the MeVa (formerly MVRTA) to advocate for improved commuter bus service and explore alternative transportation options.

## FUNDING NEEDS AND OPTIONS

The main funding needs under this strategy include:

- Funding to establish the apprenticeship/internship fund;
- Consulting services to evaluate workforce housing on the hospital campus; and
- Potential funding for alternative transportation services.



Potential funding sources to address these needs are:

- Massachusetts' Community Planning Grant Program for consulting services for planning and/or feasibility analysis for the workforce housing project and alternative transportation services;
- Massachusetts Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) provides technical assistance and funding to nonprofit developers for affordable housing projects, including planning grants (funded by the Kuehn Charitable Foundation) to help nonprofit corporations to explore the feasibility at the earliest stages of project development;
- Local foundations and employer donations are sources for the apprenticeship/internship fund. Key prospects include charitable foundations at Newburyport Bank, Newburyport Institution for Savings, and other regional banks serving Newburyport and large local employers. The core fund could be supplemented with internship and apprenticeship funding available through targeted programs at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) and grants available through Commonwealth Corporation's Workforce Training Fund; and
- Funding for transportation services would come through the MeVa and/or through employers working collaboratively to provide transportation services.

## PHASING

The projects under this strategy are medium term initiatives that can begin in year two, after the Economic Development Director has been hired, the Business and Industrial Park Association is established, and other high-priority strategies are underway. Once implemented, the promotion of working in Newburyport, the apprenticeship/internship fund, and transportation services will be on-going activities. Full implementation of workforce housing on the hospital campus, if determined feasible, is a longer term project that may take close to five years to complete.

## STRATEGY COMPONENTS AND MAIN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

### 6.1 Organize industry-based promotion of Newburyport as a place to work

This initiative would organize industry-based efforts to promote Newburyport as a place to

work and connect the emerging workforce in key occupations with Newburyport employers. It would focus on students at the region's technical high schools, community colleges, and NAMC programs (for manufacturers), especially those enrolled in related vocational training programs. Manufacturing, health care, and restaurants/food service are the most promising industries for this effort. Each industry group could provide information to students, instructors, and career counselors in these programs on employers, types of jobs and the benefits of working for a Newburyport employer; host career discovery visits at local employers; and market internships and apprenticeships at Newburyport firms to build initial connections between young workers and local employers. Key implementation steps include:

- Outreach to employers in each target industry to gauge employer interest, identify existing and potential internships and apprenticeships, and recruit members for industry teams to organize their respective promotion efforts;
- Prepare industry information on employers, job and career opportunities, the benefits of working in Newburyport, and internships and apprenticeship options;
- Meet with appropriate staff at area schools to share information, discuss how to best inform students about internships, apprenticeships and employment in Newburyport, and test interest/support for a Newburyport career discovery activity;
- Plan and hold a pilot career discovery event with employers in one industry that includes follow-up contact with student participants and a process to track and assess its effectiveness;
- Implement additional career discovery events based on results and learning from the pilot event; and
- Maintain connections with area schools for on-going recruitment of interns, apprentices and employees.

### 6.2 Establish an apprenticeship/internship fund

This fund will provide funding to expand internships and apprenticeships at Newburyport employers in alignment with the above employee recruitment initiative. As discussed earlier, funding could be raised through local and regional bank foundations, local employers, and state workforce programs. The fund and the industry-based worker recruitment could include an equity and diversity

component to connect youth from low-income and historically racially excluded communities and other young people with barriers to employment to good jobs and career opportunities in Newburyport. Key implementation steps include:

- Develop a mission statement, goals, and core guidelines for how the fund will operate and deploy its funds;
- Prepare a “pitch deck” to explain the fund’s purpose and support the fund-raising appeal;
- Develop a list of potential donors and grant funding sources and assign responsibilities for soliciting funds/preparing grant applications;
- Secure initial lead gifts and launch funding appeal/campaign; and
- Initiate the first round of grant applications once a critical mass of funding is obtained.

### **6.3 Explore feasibility of workforce housing development at Anna Jacques Hospital campus**

Anna Jacques Hospital occupies a large campus that includes large surface parking lots. It may be possible to build new housing on part of its surface parking lots while addressing existing parking needs through adding a level of parking at part of the site. The hospital campus is well located to provide housing for workers at the hospital, nearby medical offices, and the Business and Industrial Park. While Anna Jacques Hospital does not have the capacity to develop housing itself, it has expressed interest in exploring how it could lease land to a developer to build new housing while ensuring it maintains necessary parking. A study is needed to create a plan for incorporating new housing and sufficient parking at the site and determining if, and how, it would be financially feasible to implement. Key implementation steps are:

- Meet with Anna Jacques Hospital to confirm interest conducting a study and discuss process for undertaking the study;
- Secure funds to undertake the feasibility study;
- Complete a MOU with the hospital on each party’s respective roles and the study scope and process;
- Issue an RFP and select a consultant team to undertake the study; and
- Complete the study and determine next steps to advance the project, if it is deemed feasible.

### **6.4 Expand commuter transportation services and options**

Public transportation services pose a barrier for Newburyport businesses to attract and retain workers from the regional labor force. The frequency and hours of MeVa bus service do not meet the needs of many workers and employers, especially for shifts with early start times and late evening end times. Furthermore, the communities served by existing bus routes may not correspond to where some workers live. To address this challenge, Newburyport employers and government leaders can advocate for, and work with, the MeVa to expand bus service to major employment centers (the Business and Industrial Park, downtown, and hospital campus) and adjust bus schedules and routes to better align with employer needs. Since the MeVa is unlikely to be able to address the full-range of commuter transportation needs, it may be worth exploring employer-sponsored shared transportation services as an alternative or supplement to improved MeVa bus service. Options might include a commuter shuttle between one or more communities with a concentration of employees, contracting with service providers to provide on-demand transportation, or shuttles to move employees from the commuter rail station, bus stops and/or parking lots to their workplaces. These services could be organized through a Transportation Management Association, which provides access to several state funding programs or more informally through agreements negotiated among employers. Key implementation steps are:

- Conduct an employee survey to better understand commuting patterns, transportation needs, and potential demand for different transportation services;
- Meet with the MeVa Executive Director to discuss transportation needs and demand identified through the survey and other means and how the MeVa can respond to these needs;
- Create a follow-up action/advocacy plan for MeVa services;
- Survey and convene employers to assess the demand and support for funding additional transportation services beyond what the MeVa will provide; and
- Conduct a feasibility analysis on services for which strong employer demand and support exist.

# #7 CLIMATE ACTION AND RESILIENCY

Climate impacts pose a significant threat to Newburyport with considerable business activity and property value located adjacent to the riverfront. Rising sea level also poses risks to key tourism assets, most notably Plum Island and the waterfront boardwalk and park. Businesses and property owners also face a growing need to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and adopt more sustainable practices. The historic nature of the city and large National Historic District, as well as complex adaptation needs and threats related to climate change, create the need for more flexibility in City regulations to facilitate greater business investment to address these threats and advance City climate and resiliency goals. This strategy combines City actions to create a stronger enabling environment for climate and resiliency investments and expanded civic and business initiatives to promote awareness, information, and motivation to generate these investments.

## STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy comprises the following six components:

1. Adopt Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) financing;
2. Organize training, information, and technical assistance on business sustainability practices;
3. Explore the feasibility and impact of establishing zoning requirements and/or incentives for sustainable/low GHG emission “green” buildings;
4. Assess conflicts and make adjustments to building, design and historic district regulations to better accommodate GHG reduction and resiliency investment needs;
5. Organize a community campaign for business adoption of sustainability, GHG reduction, and resiliency actions; and
6. Incorporate education and information on climate change into wayfinding, narratives, and experiences for residents and visitors.

## IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS

City government and the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC) are the primary implementing organizations for this strategy. Since multiple City departments need to be involved in this strategy, the Mayor’s Office is best positioned to coordinate work to establish CPACE, explore the feasibility of new zoning requirements, and assess and adjust regulations, which cut across the Office of Planning & Development, Building Department, and Historic

District Commission. The City’s Climate Resiliency Committee and the GNCC can oversee organizing resources and campaigns to support business sustainability practices and investments, building off of the existing Forever Green committee and campaigns and tapping into expertise among existing Newburyport businesses, Mass Save, SCORE, and the SBDC. The GNCC’s new efforts as a DMO would lead work to incorporate climate change into wayfinding, narratives, and experiences, working with the City government, and umbrella arts & cultural organization.



## FUNDING NEEDS AND OPTIONS

This strategy has limited funding needs as most of the activities are people-powered and can be implemented by City government and GNCC staff in conjunction with volunteers and state/regional resources (Mass Save, SCORE, etc.). The primary new funding needs are:

- Consultants to assist with the analysis on new green building zoning requirements and review of existing regulations;
- Funding for the staff, awards, and resources needed for the business resiliency challenge; and
- Funding for creating and installing the climate components of the wayfinding system, narratives, and experiences.

Potential funding sources include:

- Massachusetts Community Planning Grant Program provides grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000 to support local planning and zoning revisions;
- Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program provides action grants to municipalities that have completed MVP planning for investments that advance local priorities to enhance resiliency, including vulnerability assessments for specific sectors; and
- The Barr Foundation, one of the largest foundations in Greater Boston, provides grants to support communities in preparing for and adapting to climate change.

## PHASING

Addressing climate change and resiliency is an ongoing and longer term process. However, most of the strategy components can be implemented in the near term and medium term to lay the foundation for sustained action and investment over time. The recommended phasing is:

- Near Term: Adopt CPACE.
- Near Term and Ongoing: Organize training, information, and technical assistance on business sustainability practices.
- Medium Term: Explore the feasibility and impact of green building zoning requirements/incentives.

- Medium Term: Assess and adjust building, design and historic district regulations to better accommodate GHG reduction and resiliency investment needs.
- Medium Term and Ongoing: Organize a community campaign for business adoption of sustainability, GHG reduction, and resiliency actions.
- Medium Term: Incorporate education and information on climate change into wayfinding, narratives, and experiences for residents and visitors.
- Longer Term: Implement revised zoning and regulations to better support climate and resiliency investments; evaluate and adapt regulations over time to improve their effectiveness.

## STRATEGY COMPONENTS MAIN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

### 7.1 Adopt Massachusetts CPACE program

Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) is a funding tool that uses revenue from a property assessment to raise private debt capital to fund energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other property improvements. It is an effective financing tool that provides long-term (20 year) capital at affordable interest rates. Local governments collect the betterment assessment as part of their standard tax collection process and transfer it to the servicer for the financing intermediary to repay the private debt that finances property improvements. Massachusetts' CPACE program is administered by MassDevelopment and can be used for industrial, commercial, and multi-family housing properties. Under Massachusetts' law, communities must opt in to the program for it be available to local property owners. A majority vote of the City Council is needed to allow CPACE financing in Newburyport. Key implementation steps are:

- Contact MassDevelopment to express interest in opting into CPACE and confirm process for securing City Council approval;
- Prepare background information on CPACE and brief the City Councilors and the Treasurer/Collector on how it works and its benefits; and
- Prepare adoption resolution and submit to City Council vote.

## 7.2

### Organize business training, technical assistance, and information sharing

Businesses face a growing set of issues in adapting to climate-related and environmental challenges that include how to best reduce their carbon footprint, adopting sustainable materials and practices, and creating resiliency and disaster plans. This project will organize training, information sharing, and technical assistance to help businesses address these challenges. Many Newburyport businesses have expertise and experience on some of these issues that can be tapped to assist local businesses while additional knowledge and resources exist in state and regional entities. The Forever Green project started work in this area, including its 2022 campaign for eco-tourism and waste reduction practices, and provides a foundation for expanding these efforts. One part of this effort would create a peer-to-peer network and peer learning opportunities among businesses that seek information on how to better address these issues. A second component is organizing more specialized training sessions on particular issues in response to business demand. Key implementation steps are:

- Survey Newburyport businesses on: 1) their interest in learning more about specific business issues (e.g., reducing waste, sourcing “green” chemicals and other inputs, energy efficiency, renewable energy, insurance for climate risks, resiliency/disaster planning, etc.); 2) their knowledge and experience with these issues; and 3) their interest in participating in a peer learning network and/or attending training events and preferred formats;
- Identify expertise and resources in state and regional organizations on priority issues to share with businesses and for delivering training events and other assistance;
- Organize peer learning groups among firms with shared learning priorities and support them in knowledge exchange activities (e.g., learning tours, meetings to share best practices, one-on-one advising, referral/resource sharing, etc.);
- Organize formal educational/training events based on priority issues and desired formats; and
- Evaluate participation in and effectiveness of different activities and use results to adjust activities.

## 7.3

### Explore feasibility of new zoning requirements and incentives

Several communities have established zoning requirements and other policies to require and/or accelerate construction or conversion of buildings that lower GHG emissions and other environmental impacts. These policies include: requiring energy performance standards for buildings over a certain size (Washington, D.C.); requiring net zero energy for new buildings (Boston, Cambridge); requiring electric heating, cooling and appliances in buildings; and providing zoning relief or incentives for buildings that meet green building or energy performance standards. As Newburyport works to achieve its climate action goals, it should consider how local zoning and regulations can help accelerate conversion of buildings away from fossil fuel energy sources and promote other green building and resiliency practices. An analysis of the feasibility of adopting these policies is a critical first step in establishing appropriate policies. This analysis would consider: the nature of the city’s building stock and new construction; how different policies are likely to impact building construction costs, operating expenses and financial feasibility—including the impact of new federal tax incentives and advances in technology; lessons from policy adoption in other small and medium-size cities; and recommend appropriate zoning and policy changes. Key implementation steps:

- Form advisory committee to work with the Office of Planning & Development in overseeing the study with representation of building owners, building designers/engineers, environmental organization and residents;
- Compile examples of similar studies along with existing policy studies and guides on the topic;
- Secure funding to undertake the analysis;
- Write RFP and hire consultants to work with the city to complete the analysis; and
- Complete the analysis and prepare proposed zoning and other policy changes based on results.

## 7.4

### Assess and adjust barriers and conflicts existing building, design, and Historic District regulations

Changes to Newburyport’s existing building stock will be necessary in coming years to reduce climate impacts and adapt to flooding and storm risk from climate change, especially in the downtown waterfront and adjacent National Historic District. Potential changes may include installation of

rooftop solar energy, retrofit of air and geothermal heat pumps, raising buildings, installing green roofs, and constructing barriers for stormwater/flood management. Existing Historic District regulations along with other zoning, design, and building regulations may prevent some of these building adaptations or create barriers by adding costs that make the needed investment prohibitive. Newburyport should work proactively to understand these conflicts and find solutions to adjust regulations to allow and facilitate these critical investments. Key implementation steps are:

- Create a City working group to assess regulatory barriers and conflicts for building GHG reduction/resiliency/climate adaptation building changes with representatives of the Building Department, Historic Commission, and Resiliency Committee;
- Define potential building changes, identify applicable regulations to review and complete the assessment;
- Use the assessment results to formulate proposed changes to building, design and historic district regulations to reduce or eliminate conflicts and accommodate needed building changes in balance with critical goals of existing regulations;
- Inform residents, property owners, businesses, and other stakeholders about these conflicts and the proposals to update regulations and hold forums to review and discuss the proposed changes; and
- Submit proposed changes for deliberation and approval by relevant boards, commissions and the City Council.

## 7.5 Organize a business resiliency campaign

Many cities and civic organizations have used campaigns and competitions to broaden awareness and mobilize action around climate change, sustainability, or resiliency. These campaigns typically involve an initial outreach and education effort to recruit participants, assistance and support around implementing actions, a defined time period to make and document changes, and awards and recognition for both individual businesses and community-wide results. Examples of such campaigns include “kilowatt crackdowns” organized by building owner associations in several cities and the US DOE’s Better Buildings to promote energy efficiency improvements and business sustainability award programs or campaigns, including past ones organized by A Better City’s Challenge for

Sustainability in Boston and the Bay Area Green Business Program. Key implementation steps are:

- Confirm business support for the campaign;
- Design the key campaign elements, including target business types, breadth of focus, technical assistance/support provided, timeframe, goals and nature of recognition/awards;
- Secure funds to staff and implement the campaign;
- Recruit and register participants;
- Launch the campaign with a kick-off event and initial information/training session;
- Support the campaign with on-going assistance and by tracking and reporting progress;
- Hold an awards/recognition event to complete the campaign and document its accomplishments; and
- Conduct a post-campaign survey of participants to draw lessons and decide on future campaigns or other means to sustain business resiliency efforts.

## 7.6 Incorporate information on climate action and resiliency in wayfinding and themed experiences

Newburyport has done considerable work around climate action and resiliency with many examples of projects and initiatives in this realm. The City can use the work to create a new wayfinding system and define experiences around distinct themes to highlight this work and increase community awareness of the importance of these issues and how the City is working to address them. Key implementation steps:

- Collect information on key plans, projects, and initiatives related to climate and resiliency;
- Decide on several themes to use to organize the information and create connected narratives and sites for experiences;
- Create compelling and engaging content to use in the wayfinding materials and experiences; and
- Incorporate this content into the wayfinding and experiences created through the tourism and arts and culture branding, marketing, and development strategy.





# 5

## Implementation Action Plan

# section 5 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

This section summarizes the overall approach to CEDS implementation and provides an action plan matrix detailing the funding, implementation parties, and key steps for each strategy component. A separate chart presents proposed phasing for implementation. Successful implementation will depend on cross-sector collaboration and a “collective impact” approach to economic development. No one sector or organization can undertake the work needed to achieve Newburyport’s economic development goals. Shared action and alignment of efforts will improve results and capitalize on the complementary resources and capacities of City government, for profit and nonprofit businesses and civic organizations, and the philanthropic community. The collective impact approach is reflected in: 1) forming a representative cross-sector Economic Development Committee to oversee implementation; and 2) working through a lead organization collaborating implementation partners to execute strategy components.

CEDS implementation will be led by the City of Newburyport in partnership with economic development stakeholders. The new City Economic Development Committee will oversee strategy implementation—working to align actions across organizations and stakeholders, holding parties accountable for following through on responsibilities, and reviewing and adapting the strategy over time in response to new conditions and incorporating learning as initiatives are implemented. The City Economic Development Director will be responsible for the day-to-day CEDS coordination, both overseeing implementation of several initiatives and supporting the organizations and teams responsible for others.

**Table 4-1** presents the detailed implementation action plan organized by strategy with a row for each component initiative. Under each initiative, the required resources are noted along with the lead organization, implementation partners, and initial recommendations for implementation steps. These steps should be reviewed by the implementation parties as work begins, and adapted over time based on their experience and evolving conditions.

An implementation phasing plan is presented in **Table 4-2**. The CEDS is an ambitious strategy with many components that need to be phased over time to reflect the limitations in staff and volunteer capacity and the time required to

secure funding necessary to move forward with many initiatives. The phasing plan assumes that CEDS implementation will begin in FY2024 (July 2023 to June 2024) and details phasing through FY2018. Priorities during the first year are:

- Implementing the Economic Development Capacity Strategy to create a strong foundation for successful action on other strategies;
- Advancing planning work to expand real estate supply;
- Initiating work to establish the funding, branding, and infrastructure for unified marketing of tourism and arts/cultural/historic assets;
- Establishing the umbrella organization and City Arts & Cultural Liaison to advance support for the arts/cultural/historic sector; and
- Advancing climate and resiliency work by opting into the CPACE program and organizing resources to support business adoption of sustainability and resiliency practices.

Implementation of the Workforce Attraction and Development Strategy and several of the new Small Business Support programs is recommended for the second year (FY2025) to provide time to establish the new staff and organization capacity, ensure progress on other strategies and engage the volunteer teams and resource partners needed for implementation.

**Table 5-1. CEDS Implementation Action Plan**

**Key to Table 4-1**

BIPA	Business & Industrial Park Association	MassDOT	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
CPACE	Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy financing structure	MVPC	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
DMO	Destination Marketing Organization	MeVa	Merrimack Valley Transit
ED Director	City Economic Development Director	OP&D	City Office of Planning & Development
GNCC	Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce	SBDC	Small Business Development Center
GHG	Green House Gas	SCORE	Service Corps of Retired Executives
HPP	Housing Production Plan		
IT	Information Technology		

#	Strategy and Components	Funding/ Resources Needed	Lead Implementor/ Convener	Implementation Partners	Implementation Action Steps
<b>#1 - Economic Development Capacity</b>					
1.1	<b>Create a City Economic Development Director staff position</b>	Multi-year City funding ~\$100,000+/year	Mayor and City Council	OP&D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Appropriate funds for position</li> <li>•Create the position in City HR system</li> <li>•Complete hiring process</li> </ul>
1.2	<b>Create Economic Development Committee to oversee strategy implementation</b>	No cost; existing staff and volunteers	Mayor	Local businesses, banks, property owners, GNCC, Arts & Culture sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recruit &amp; appoint committee</li> </ul>
1.3	<b>Revive the Business &amp; Industrial Park Association (BIPA)</b>	Relies on volunteers; limited costs paid by business members	Park businesses & property owners	ED Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Form a committee interested in reviving the association;</li> <li>•Conduct one-one-one outreach to park business</li> <li>•Define association mission, activities and structure</li> <li>•Meet to finalize association plans &amp; form leadership group &amp; committees</li> </ul>
1.4	<b>Expand Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce capacity as a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)</b>	\$75,000 to \$125,000+/yr. from businesses advertising revenue, grants, hotel/motel tax assessment	GNCC	Businesses, lodging owners, North of Boston, Arts & Culture organizations. regional trails/coastal route, ED Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Confirm board &amp; membership support for expanded GNCC role as DMO</li> <li>•Form advisory board to oversee &amp; support DMO activities</li> <li>•Formulate funding plan &amp; secure stakeholder</li> <li>•Implement the funding plan</li> <li>•Deploy new funding to hire staff &amp; consultants</li> </ul>
1.5	<b>Strengthen state and regional relationships</b>	No cost; existing staff and volunteers	City- ED Director	GNCC ; other implementing parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Conduct outreach to target organizations</li> <li>•Identify services &amp; resources aligned with CEDS initiatives</li> <li>•Work with target organizations to access resources</li> <li>•Maintain ongoing relationships and communications</li> </ul>



#	Strategy and Components	Funding/ Resources Needed	Lead Implementor/ Convener	Implementation Partners	Implementation Action Steps
<b>#2 - Small Business Support</b>					
2.1	<b>Designate City Economic Development Director as Small Business Support Coordinator</b>	No cost beyond ED Director & existing staff	City- ED Director	Other City staff, GNCC, SBDC, SCORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Hire Economic Developer</li> <li>•Review business websites &amp; guides in comparable cities</li> <li>•Formalize tasks/responsibilities for small business coordinator function</li> </ul>
2.2	<b>Improve City online information</b>	No cost beyond ED Director	City- ED Director	City IT staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meet with the City IT Director on process and timeline</li> <li>•Hold focus groups with small business owners</li> <li>•Scan of business websites &amp; guides in comparable cities</li> <li>•Determine business types &amp; content for guides; schedule phased preparation</li> <li>•Collect information on requirements to open each type of business</li> <li>•Prepare draft guides and circulate for review</li> <li>•Develop web page content &amp; design; prepare a beta version to test</li> <li>•Finalize and publicize new business website and guides</li> </ul>
2.3	<b>Create a small business grant program</b>	Annual capital for grants (\$25,000 to \$50,000) - raised from chamber & bank foundations and donations; existing staff & volunteers	GNCC	Local Banks, BIPA, ED Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Confirm GNCC Foundation interest in program &amp; providing initial funding</li> <li>•Design program &amp; raise grant capital</li> <li>•Meet with local banks &amp; city officials on providing funding</li> <li>•Complete program design &amp; review with local stakeholders</li> <li>•Secure funding from bank foundations, corporate donations &amp; others</li> <li>•Finalize program design, application materials, &amp; grant agreements</li> <li>•Launch first grant application/award round &amp; continue annually</li> </ul>
2.4	<b>Create an annual business competition</b>	Annual funding/contributed services for prizes; existing staff & volunteer time	GNCC	Local Banks, BIPA, ED Director, SBDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recruit SCORE, SBDC office &amp; other experts to advise entrepreneurs</li> <li>•Secure sponsorships &amp; other funds for prizes &amp; other costs</li> <li>•Research business competitions in other small cities</li> <li>•Design competition process and schedule</li> <li>•Launch first competition</li> <li>•Review lessons from first competition &amp; make adjustments</li> </ul>
2.5	<b>Develop a business outreach program</b>	No cost beyond ED Director	City- ED Director	GNCC, local volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Design the outreach visit protocol &amp; process</li> <li>•Recruit &amp; train volunteers to assist with outreach visits</li> <li>•Schedule &amp; conduct regular visits to businesses</li> <li>•Follow up with businesses on identified information/assistance needs</li> <li>•Convene meetings of visitation "staff" to discuss any emerging trends and issues</li> </ul>
2.6	<b>Implement regulatory and policy changes</b>	No cost beyond ED Director & existing City staff	City- ED Director	OP&D, other City staff and boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create interagency team to review &amp; prepare amendments, guidelines &amp; other implementation actions</li> <li>•Review proposed changes/actions with key stakeholders</li> <li>•Finalize regulatory changes/action &amp; submit for approval by boards/City Council</li> <li>•Authorize City capital funding for outdoor dining infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>

#	Strategy and Components	Funding/ Resources Needed	Lead Implementor/ Convener	Implementation Partners	Implementation Action Steps
<b>#3 - Support Tourism and Arts &amp; Culture Branding, Marketing &amp; Development</b>					
3.1	Create branding for the city that addresses the visitor economy and includes arts, culture, and historical destinations and experiences	Cost for consultant	GNCC	ED Director, City Arts & Cultural Liaison, task force of businesses and major cultural/historic/recreational destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire a consultant to lead branding efforts and overall marketing strategy</li> <li>Develop brand for city and create graphics, logos, and other digital assets and standards</li> </ul>
3.2	Create a unified tourism/events/arts & culture website	Costs for initial website design (~\$40,000) and staff/consultant for ongoing maintenance/calendar listings (~\$1,000+ monthly)	GNCC	Info for calendar/self posting by businesses/organizations, City Arts & Cultural Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an advisory committee to advise on the creation of a tourism website</li> <li>Hire a consultant to create website</li> <li>Work with consultant to develop goals for website and overall framework</li> <li>Develop a system for keeping an up-to-date visitor calendar</li> <li>Beta-test the website and calendar population features</li> <li>Launch website</li> </ul>
3.3	Create visitor marketing materials and itineraries	Cost for design, production, distribution	GNCC	Clipper Heritage Trail, Clipper City Rail Trail and Harborwalk, Cultural Council, City Arts & Cultural Liaison, other destinations and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a range of narratives or itineraries for visitors</li> <li>Work with stakeholders to create an integrated route map showing range of experiences and walks, parking, and transportation networks.</li> <li>Coordinate with wayfinding plan to integrate narratives and districts/trails into overall signage and maps throughout city;</li> <li>Create a range of digital and print assets for visitors and residents.</li> </ul>
3.4	Finalize and implement the Wayfinding Plan, including visitor/arts & cultural destinations, cultural district and historic district signs	Cost for design, construction, installation - determined by Wayfinding Plan	City- OP&D	Coordinate with branding efforts, GNCC, Umbrella Arts and Cultural org, other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review draft wayfinding study and identify areas that require updates based on tourism branding efforts and CEDS recommendations</li> <li>Update Wayfinding Plan and finalize;</li> <li>Allocate City capital funding for wayfinding and implement plan</li> </ul>
3.5	Review/expand events	Event funding - from private sources	GNCC, Arts/Cultural organizations	Coordination/participation with businesses and other destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review comprehensive list of events in city, including season, market characteristics of attendees, and location. Add and update information as necessary</li> <li>Develop a list of goals for events</li> <li>Identify gaps in events according to established goals</li> <li>Survey businesses to understand impacts of events and identify potential ways events can better support</li> <li>Institute changes and/or additions to events to achieve goals</li> <li>Develop new events or partner with organizations and organizers to broaden offerings as necessary</li> </ul>
3.6	Expand the visitor center	Cost for new structure and equipment	City	GNCC, Waterfront Trust, coordination with Wayfinding Plan, Umbrella Arts & Cultural org. for incorporation of public art, regional trails and marketing efforts for signage and maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review visitor facilities in comparable towns and cities to understand existing expectation and standards in similar markets</li> <li>Discuss options and potential constraints</li> <li>Coordinate efforts with Wayfinding Plan, Arts &amp; Cultural Umbrella org for public art possibilities, regional trails and marketing efforts for signage and maps</li> <li>Develop a cost estimate for new visitor facilities, including staff/volunteer needs</li> <li>Allocate funding for center, implement design and construction plan</li> </ul>
3.7	Develop a downtown bike share program	Cost to conduct initial planning via City funding, cost to establish may need grants	City with private operator	Collaboration with area health foundations (possible funding), GNCC, other bike share programs in region, possibly MBTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a community and visitor survey gauging interest in a bikesharing program</li> <li>Conduct outreach to area health foundations to explore interest in providing support and grants</li> <li>Evaluate and identify opportunities for system integration of bikeshare facilities within overall transportation network</li> <li>Determine goals and metrics to measure progress for a city bikeshare program</li> <li>Issue a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for private bikeshare companies/investors</li> <li>Begin planning the system (service area, size, bikeshare type)</li> <li>Develop financial model</li> <li>Implement system</li> </ul>

#	Strategy and Components	Funding/ Resources Needed	Lead Implementor/ Convener	Implementation Partners	Implementation Action Steps
<b>#4 - Create Unified Support and Advocacy for Arts, Cultural, &amp; Historic Assets</b>					
4.1	<b>Designate an Arts &amp; Cultural Liaison in City Hall</b>	No funding, existing City staff with clearly defined roles/time allotted for liaison activities	City- Mayor's Office	Cultural Council, Historical Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Convene a meeting of arts, culture, historic stakeholders to discuss their needs and potential roles of the Liaison</li> <li>•Develop clear job description and roles</li> <li>•Designate staff person to be the Liaison</li> <li>•Announce Liaison position with information on roles to the community</li> </ul>
4.2	<b>Identify an existing or new group to serve as an umbrella advocacy and collaboration organization to represent all arts, cultural, and historic organizations and destinations</b>	No funding if informal group with outside fiscal agent, start-up costs for a 501(c)3 (not recommended at this time)	Newburyport Arts, Newburyport Arts Collective, or other	Additional nonprofit organizations, institutions, and individual artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Convene current members of the NAC as well as others to review work of the NAC and create an updated goals statement</li> <li>•Determine how NAC can continue as the advocacy group:</li> </ul> <p>Near Term Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Review and revise, if applicable, mission statement</li> <li>o Articulate near and medium term goals</li> <li>o Determine Leadership</li> <li>o Determine how representation will be provided for other CEDS implementation elements</li> <li>o Identify assistance needed from City, Chamber, etc.</li> <li>o Reaffirm choice of an outside fiscal agent for the near term</li> <li>o Advocate for City funding to develop itineraries and arts, culture, historic experiences</li> </ul> <p>Longer Term Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Explore interest and capacity to create a formal Newburyport Arts, Culture, and Historic nonprofit with paid staff</li> </ul>
4.3	<b>Conduct a space supply and demand survey</b>	Funding for consultant (~\$15,000), costs to maintain the resulting database or use information to match supply and demand	City Arts & Cultural Liaison, Mayor's Office	Cultural Council, Umbrella Arts & Cultural org, property owners/managers, real estate brokers, GNCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Allocate funding or City staff time to create an online space supply and demand survey</li> <li>•Conduct a campaign to notify stakeholders of pending survey</li> <li>•Distribute survey link</li> <li>•Analyze results</li> <li>•Create and maintain a database of space supply including detailed characteristics</li> <li>•Consider creating guidelines for property owners</li> <li>•Create a list of arts/culture/historic organizations/individuals seeking space to facilitate matches</li> <li>•Market or make available the database to enhance the city's image as a welcoming place for arts, culture, history</li> </ul>
4.4	<b>Develop criteria/goals to support local businesses and destinations during festivals &amp; events</b>	No funding	GNCC	GNCC, downtown businesses or businesses within area of events with input from Umbrella Arts & Cultural org, existing event organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Survey businesses and organizations to determine successes in past and perceived challenges</li> <li>•Use survey to collaboratively develop goals and guidelines for festivals and events</li> <li>•Create a mechanism to measure and draw return customers and receive ongoing feedback from local businesses and organizations</li> <li>•Create ways to incorporate guidelines into discussions with event organizers and determine City/Chamber representation in planning</li> </ul>
4.5	<b>Streamline alcohol licensing, assembly and events permitting</b>	No funding beyond existing City staff; may impact fee revenue	City- Mayor's Office, City Clerk, and/or OP&D	City Council, other City Departments, i.e., Public Services, Health, Police, Fire, and others, Waterfront Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Designate lead/project manager in City Hall to coordinate this effort. Consultant may be needed to provide support</li> <li>•Examine similar streamlining efforts in other municipalities to help guide process and simplify efforts</li> <li>•Create a list of challenges for businesses and organizations as well as for City departments by surveying each</li> <li>•Convene all departments involved in g permitting and licensing requirements</li> <li>•Use meetings to develop potential methods for streamlining processes</li> <li>•Create process charts and checklists to help align expectations across all stakeholders and the City</li> <li>•Consider simplified permitting for single events (one-day licenses), particularly for small-scale, and/or a mechanism for specified multi-event licenses</li> </ul>



#	Strategy and Components	Funding/ Resources Needed	Lead Implementor/ Convener	Implementation Partners	Implementation Action Steps
<b>#5 - Real Estate Supply</b>					
5.1	<b>Update zoning for the Business and Industrial Park</b>	No funding, existing City staff & Planning Board	City- OP&D	Advisory Committee of park stakeholders, Planning Board, City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create advisory committee to work with OP&amp;D &amp; Planning Board</li> <li>•Survey existing conditions and connections with surrounding neighborhoods</li> <li>•Obtain input from existing park businesses on their needs &amp; future plans</li> <li>•Formulate proposed zoning changes &amp; review with the advisory committee</li> <li>•Submit proposed zoning changes for public comment and adoption</li> </ul>
5.2	<b>Promote Storey Avenue mixed-use redevelopment</b>	Funds for planning consultant	City- OP&D	Advisory Committee of area stakeholders, Planning Board, City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Develop scope/secure funding for "Vision and Development Plan"</li> <li>•Issue RFP/select consultant to support planning process</li> <li>•Complete planning process with recommendations</li> <li>•Review recommended zoning &amp; policies with public &amp; key stakeholders</li> <li>•Adopt the recommended plan, zoning and related policies</li> </ul>
5.3	<b>Support Waterfront West development</b>	Possible infrastructure funding, incentives	City- OP&D	New England Development, district stakeholders, Planning Board, City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Complete DIF feasibility study</li> <li>•Work with NE Development to create plan aligned with City priorities</li> <li>•Determine impact mitigation &amp; community benefits actions</li> <li>•Public review of City approval of development plan</li> </ul>
5.4	<b>Encourage planning for the future of the C &amp; J Transportation site</b>	Unknown	City- Mayor	OP&D, Legislative Delegation, MassDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Brief state legislative delegation</li> <li>•Meet with the city's legislative delegation &amp; MassDOT</li> <li>•Formulate next steps to advance planning and interim uses</li> </ul>
5.5	<b>Attract hotel development</b>	Existing staff- no funding	City with property owner(s)	City Arts & Cultural Liaison and Umbrella Arts & Cultural org for possible incorporation of public art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identify near-term sites appropriate for hotel development</li> <li>•Work with property owners/developers to ensure City goals are met</li> <li>•Streamline permitting where possible</li> </ul>
5.6	<b>Create housing development strategy</b>	Existing staff- no funding	City-OP&D	Affordable Housing Trust. Planning Board, MVPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Incorporate housing development strategy in Housing Production Plan (HPP) scope</li> <li>•Identify/assign new research, analysis &amp; planning tasks for strategy</li> <li>•Formulate and incorporate strategy into the updated HPP</li> </ul>
5.7	<b>Actively market Newburyport as a business and economic development location</b>	No funding beyond ED Director	City -ED Director	GNCC, Property owners, Real Estate brokers, MVPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create marketing materials on Newburyport value proposition</li> <li>•Create an inventory of available real estate &amp; process for updating</li> <li>•Create a city economic development website</li> <li>•Build relationships with key economic development agencies</li> <li>•Identify priority associations &amp; business influencers to market Newburyport</li> </ul>

#	Strategy and Components	Funding/ Resources Needed	Lead Implementor/ Convener	Implementation Partners	Implementation Action Steps
<b>#6 - Workforce Attraction and Development</b>					
6.1	<b>Organize industry-based promotion of Newburyport as a place to work</b>	No costs- volunteers with existing staff	GNCC	ED Director, BIPA, employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Conduct employer outreach &amp; form industry promotion teams</li> <li>•Prepare information on NBPT employers, job/career opportunities, internships &amp; apprenticeships</li> <li>•Meet area schools to share information on NBPT jobs, internships, apprenticeships and test Newburyport career discovery proposal</li> <li>•Plan and hold pilot career discovery event with employers in one industry</li> <li>•Implement additional career discovery events</li> <li>•Maintain connections with schools for ongoing recruitment efforts</li> </ul>
6.2	<b>Establish an apprenticeship/internship fund</b>	Capital for fund, ED Director and volunteers to administer	GNCC	ED Director, Newburyport Bank, employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Develop fund mission statement, goals &amp; guidelines</li> <li>•Prepare a “pitch deck” &amp; materials for fund-raising</li> <li>•Develop a list of potential donors/funder with assignments</li> <li>•Secure initial lead gifts &amp; launch funding appeal</li> <li>•Initiate first round of grant applications</li> </ul>
6.3	<b>Explore feasibility of a workforce housing development on Anna Jacques Hospital campus</b>	Cost for feasibility study & parking options	City- OP&D and AJ Hospital	Fuller staffing for hospital and local businesses; expand housing options and affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meet with Anna Jacques Hospital to confirm interest &amp; study process</li> <li>•Secure funds for feasibility study</li> <li>•Complete MOU on roles, study scope &amp; process;</li> <li>•Issue study RFP &amp; select consultant</li> <li>•Complete &amp; determine next steps to advance the project, if deemed feasible.</li> </ul>
6.4	<b>Expand commuter transportation services and options</b>	Funding for new services via MeVa, employers and/grants	City- ED Director	GNCC, BIPA, employers, & MeVa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Conduct an employee survey on transportation needs/demand</li> <li>•Meet with the MeVa Executive Director on addressing identified transportation needs</li> <li>•Create follow-up action/advocacy plan for MeVa services.</li> <li>•Survey/convene employers to assess demand/support for additional services</li> <li>•Conduct a feasibility analysis for services with employer demand/support</li> </ul>

#	Strategy and Components	Funding/ Resources Needed	Lead Implementor/ Convener	Implementation Partners	Implementation Action Steps
<b>#7 - Climate Action and Resiliency</b>					
7.1	Adopt CPACE	No cost	City Council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Contact MassDevelopment</li> <li>•Prepare information/brief City Councilors &amp; Treasurer/Collector</li> <li>•Prepare adoption resolution/submit to City Council vote</li> </ul>
7.2	Organize training, information and technical assistance on business sustainability practices	No/low cost	GNCC	BIPA, City Resiliency Committee, Mass Save, businesses, SCORE, SBDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Survey Newburyport business on issue interests &amp; expertise</li> <li>•Identify resources in state &amp; regional entities on priority issues</li> <li>•Organize peer learning groups &amp; support knowledge exchange activities</li> <li>•Organize formal educational/training events</li> <li>•Evaluate effectiveness and adjust activities over time</li> </ul>
7.3	Explore feasibility/impact of zoning requirements and/or incentives for sustainable/low GHG emission buildings	Possible cost for consultant	City- OP&D	ED Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Form advisory committee</li> <li>•Compile similar studies &amp; related policy research/guides</li> <li>•Secure funding for study/analysis;</li> <li>•Write RFP and hire consultants to help complete the analysis</li> <li>•Conduct analysis &amp; prepare proposals based on results</li> </ul>
7.4	Assess conflicts and make adjustments to building, design, and historic district regulations to better accommodate GHG reduction and resiliency investment needs	Possible cost for consultant	City- OP&D	City Building Department, Historic Commission, City Resiliency Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create City working group to assess regulatory barriers and conflicts</li> <li>•Define building changes, identify applicable regulations and complete assessment</li> <li>•Use assessment results to formulate proposed regulatory</li> <li>•Inform stakeholders about these conflicts and discuss proposals to update regulations</li> <li>•Submit proposed changes for approval by relevant boards and City Council</li> </ul>
7.5	Organize a community campaign for business adoption of sustainability, GHG reduction, and resiliency actions	Costs for publicity, events; staffing	City Resiliency Committee	Forever Green committee, GNCC, Mass Save, BIPA, property owners & businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Confirm business support for the campaign</li> <li>•Design the key campaign elements</li> <li>•Secure funds to staff and implement the campaign</li> <li>•Recruit and register participants</li> <li>•Launch campaign with kick-off event &amp; information/training session</li> <li>•Support the campaign with assistance/tracking &amp; reporting progress</li> <li>•Hold awards/recognition event to complete campaign &amp; report results</li> <li>•Conduct a post-campaign survey of participants to inform future business resiliency efforts</li> </ul>
7.6	Incorporate education/info on climate action and resiliency in wayfinding and themed experiences	Included in costs for wayfinding/tourism marketing	DMO	City , GNCC, Forever Green Committee, NAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Collect information on key plans, projects, and initiatives</li> <li>•Decide on several themes to create connected narratives &amp; experiences</li> <li>•Create compelling and engaging content for wayfinding materials &amp; experiences</li> <li>•Incorporate content into implemented wayfinding &amp; marketing</li> </ul>



Table 5-2. CEDS Implementation Phasing

#	Strategy Components	Year 1: FY 2024				Year 2: FY 2025		Year 3: FY 2026		Year 4	Year 5
		1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	1st Half	2nd Half	1st Half	2nd Half	FY 2027	FY 2028
<b>#1 - Economic Development Capacity</b>											
1.1	Create a City Economic Development Director staff position										
1.2	Create a Economic Development Committee to oversee strategy implementation										
1.3	Revive the Business & Industrial Park Association (BIPA)										
1.4	Expand Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce capacity as a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)										
1.5	Strengthen state and regional relationships										
<b>#2 - Small Business Support</b>											
2.1	Designate City Economic Development Director as Small Business Support Coordinator										
2.2	Improve City online information										
2.3	Create a small business grant program										
2.4	Create an annual business competition										
2.5	Develop a business outreach program										
2.6	Implement regulatory and policy changes										
<b>#3 - Support Tourism and Arts &amp; Culture Branding, Marketing &amp; Development</b>											
3.1	Create branding for the city that addresses the visitor economy and includes arts, culture, and historical destinations and experiences										
3.2	Create a unified tourism/events/arts & culture website										
3.3	Create visitor marketing materials and itineraries										
3.4	Finalize and implement Wayfinding Plan, including visitor/arts & cultural destinations, cultural district and historic district signs										
3.5	Review/expand events										
3.6	Expand the visitor center										
3.7	Develop a downtown bike share program										
<b>#4 - Create Unified Support and Advocacy for Arts, Cultural, &amp; Historic Assets</b>											
4.1	Designate an Arts & Cultural Liaison in City Hall										
4.2	Identify an existing or new group to serve as an umbrella advocacy and collaboration organization to represent all arts, cultural, and historic organizations and destinations									Explore with professional staffing	nonprofit
4.3	Conduct a space supply and demand survey										
4.4	Develop criteria/goals to support local businesses and destinations during festivals & events										
4.5	Streamline alcohol licensing, assembly and events permitting										
<b>#5 - Real Estate Supply</b>											
5.1	Update zoning for the Business and Industrial Park										
5.2	Promote Storey Avenue mixed-use redevelopment										
5.3	Support Waterfront West development										
5.4	Encourage planning for the future of the C & J Transportation site										
5.5	Attract hotel development										
5.6	Create a housing development strategy										
5.7	Actively market Newburyport as a business and economic development location										
<b>#6 - Workforce Attraction and Development</b>											
6.1	Organize industry-based promotion of Newburyport as a place to work										
6.2	Establish an apprenticeship/internship fund										
6.3	Explore feasibility of a workforce housing development on Anna Jacques Hospital campus										
6.4	Expand commuter transportation services and options										
<b>#7 - Climate Action and Resiliency</b>											
7.1	Adopt CPACE										
7.2	Organize training, information and technical assistance on business sustainability practices										
7.3	Explore feasibility/impact of zoning requirements and/or incentives for sustainable/low GHG emission buildings										
7.4	Assess conflicts and make adjustments to building, design, and historic district regulations to better accommodate GHG reduction and resiliency investment needs										
7.5	Organize a community campaign for business adoption of sustainability, GHG reduction, and resiliency actions										
7.6	Incorporate education/info on climate action and resiliency in wayfinding and themed experiences										