

# NMP 2020-2030: VISION

## NEWINGTON'S VISION

A vision articulates the desires of citizens affected by the Master Plan (MP<sup>1</sup>). Newington citizens have consistently focused on preserving a community identity that retains a rural character. Newington is a prosperous, safe, well-planned community with thriving commercial and industrial districts, all while retaining rural neighborhoods in the residential district. The town balances our rural residential character while continuing to promote:

- Waterfront industry and a deep-water working port
- High value commercial and industrial uses in their districts
- Preservation of our historical and environmental resources

Newington intends to remain a progressive NH community focusing on a quality of life for our residents. Newington will continue to collaborate well with our neighbors on regional opportunities to solve regional problems, but also to eliminate further loss of land and control for Federal, State, and utility uses.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH RECONFIRMING NEWINGTON VISION

Newington partnered with the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) to gather information from residents about Newington's future. Residents provided input via a paper or on-line survey in September 2017. Seventy-five surveys were received with half of the respondents indicating they had been residents for 10 years or less. The RPC held three visioning sessions in November 2017, with 15-20 residents at each of the three sessions. The information collected from the surveys, listening sessions, and land use boards agree with the qualities, attributes, and priorities in the planning board's Master Plan for implementing Newington's vision. A summary and direct inputs received from respondents to both the survey and visioning sessions are found in Appendix IX - A and IX-B respectively.



The “word cloud”, above, illustrates characteristics of Newington valued by residents as indicated in the community survey. The prominence of the word reflects the frequency and the number of times a word appeared in resident responses.

<sup>1</sup> RSA 675:2(a) The master plan shall include a vision section that serves to direct other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.

# NMP 2020-2030: DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

## NEWINGTON DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

A town's Master Plan is primarily a policy document containing a set of guiding principles to implement its vision. From the initial master plan in 1965, the town has consistently endorsed these development policies and they remain **Newington's official position** for evaluating future land uses:

**Policy 1: Preserve Newington's rural residential character with ample open access.** Protection of Newington's residential areas is central to the Master Plan to include conservation of accessible wetlands, forests, agriculture land and open space for recreation. *The purpose is to ensure the quality of life in Newington's residential areas is protected from incompatible uses<sup>1</sup>.*

**Policy 2: Promote industrial development, providing that conflicts between incompatible land uses are minimized, the environment is not adversely affected, and public safety is ensured.** *Newington takes a relatively positive attitude towards commercial and industrial growth as providing strong tax revenues and diversity for the town.* Conflicting, less desirable land uses will be limited to avoid a scarcity of industrial land. Negative impacts of materials and processes hazardous to the environment and nearby residents warrant appropriate mitigation.

**Policy 3: Encourage attractive and efficient commercial and office development.** Such development does not generate large traffic volume, nor create municipal burdens to the taxpayers, resulting from inefficient service-demanding uses.

**Policy 4: Reserve Piscataqua shorefront for seaport-based industry.** New Hampshire's limited deep-water frontage is a prime resource that shall be reserved for optimum sea-based use so that the economic benefits can be realized to the fullest extent.

**Policy 5: Seek a range of housing appropriate for a high land value area, recognizing constraints such as federal and state agencies precluding residential housing in over 55% of land in town.** Balancing the need for a variety of housing types with a limited amount of developable land and lack of infrastructure is a complex problem that requires the consideration of innovative housing techniques, such as accessory dwelling units

**Policy 6: Maintain and develop community services and facilities in a manner consistent with orderly growth and Newington's rural character, while not placing a financial burden on the community.** Town services will need periodic updates, but must retain the fiscal discipline to avoid wasteful, premature expansion that exceeds matching the broad needs of a small, slow-growing population.

**Policy 7: Protect the shorelines and tributaries of Great Bay, Little Bay, and Piscataqua River while improving access for all.** *The purpose is to promote uses that recognize the area's designation as a National Estuarine Research Reserve by enriching estuarian life, improving bay water quality, and protecting diverse wildlife habitats in and along the waterways.* Encourage low-impact public access to the bay and make improvements that adapt the shoreline to endure climate change.

**Policy 8: Protect Newington's historic architecture, scenic fields & forests, and cultural heritage.** Such historic features and viewscapes stir a rich sense of heritage for Newington residents. They warrant extra dedication to preserve these sites or to incorporate them into future developments for cost effective preservation.

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<sup>1</sup> Incompatible uses are those that do not contribute directly to the betterment of the residential district; examples include but are not limited: utility transmission lines, Federal/State transportation activity raising residential safety issues.

# NMP 2020-2030 – Strategies for Implementing Policies

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING OUR VISION

### **Policy 1: Preserve Newington’s rural residential character with ample open access**

- Strategy 1: Highly scrutinize development that have excess levels of conflict with residential life

Action: Restrict development in the residential district that does not provide a direct benefit to the quality of life for those residing in the district and takes away from the residential use of the property, such as new utility easements and infrastructure, flight paths, and transportation corridors.

- Strategy 2: Protection of agricultural lands and agricultural activities.

Action: Work with the landowners and regional land conservation organizations to prioritize agricultural lands for protection through conservation easements, land purchase, and current use.

- Strategy 3: Protection of shorelands, wetlands, streams, and ponds.

Action: Review stormwater management, buffer, and setback regulations to identify opportunities to strengthen protection of surface water resources.

- Strategy 4: Identification and protection of wildlife corridors and recreational travel routes for people.

Action: Review the NH Wildlife Action Plan maps for Newington to identify wildlife habitat types and opportunities to protect wildlife corridors. Add safe bike lanes, and areas for off-road walking trails.

- Strategy 5: Preservation of woodlands and other open spaces through the use of land purchase, conservation easements, and current use in the residential areas.

Action: Work with landowners and regional land conservation organizations to prioritize woodland and other undeveloped land in the residential district for protection through fee simple purchase of land and conservation easements. Support regional strategies for land conservation, such as the NH Fish and Game Wildlife Action Plan, and The Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire’s Coastal Watersheds.

**Policy 2: Promote industrial development, providing that conflicts between incompatible land uses are minimized, the environment is not adversely affected, and public safety is ensured.**

- Strategy 1: Encourage responsible industrial development to broaden the tax base and provide quality jobs.

Action: Support the Economic Development Committee's efforts to market Newington's industrial zones to industries that create skilled jobs and lay groundwork for new industries with future high demand. Scrutinize sites for excessive noise, light, odors, fumes, dust, and vibration.

- Strategy 2: Improve the safety of the transportation network in the industrial district by improving major highway access, preserving Shattuck Way for industrial uses, and proposing new cross-lot access to waterfront and industry facilities.

Action: Require applicants to identify routes for vehicles waterfront and commercial zones.

Action: Encourage industrial development that can use existing rail service.

- Strategy 3: Town of Newington continues to mandate land use along the Piscataqua River be dependent upon ocean-going transport to ensure continued delivery of materials essential to the state.

Action: Market Newington's shorefront industrial zone to industries requiring ocean-going transport and prevent uses that conflict with heavy, ocean-based industry.

Action: Coordinate with NH Port Authority on marine issues.

**Policy 3: Encourage attractive and efficient commercial and office development.**

- Strategy 1: Encourage responsible commercial development prioritizing attractive site design.

Action: Update site plan development regulations to foster attractive site design, mitigating offsite environmental conflicts.

- Strategy 2: Plan for the possible decline of brick and mortar retail facilities and for technology and environment shifts that undermine or replace the current commercial and industry base.

Action: Review Town land use regulations to identify ways to encourage development in areas of underutilized existing commercial and retail development, including allowing offices, hotels, hospital and medical services, and similar businesses in commercial zones.

Action: Allow for development of the perimeter of the of parking area in the mall to expand opportunities for commercial and office development.

- Strategy 3: Improve the transportation network in the Woodbury Avenue commercial and office district.

Action: Allow interconnections in commercial redevelopment areas, control access to Woodbury Avenue, improve aesthetics, and plan for bicycle and pedestrian movement.

**Policy 4: Reserve Piscataqua shorefront for seaport-based industry growth.**

- Strategy 1: Ensure land use along the Piscataqua River that is dependent upon ocean-going transport.

Action: Market Newington's shorefront industrial zone to industries requiring ocean-going transport; vigorously deter uses in conflict with or that restrict heavy, ocean-based industry; seek to expand rail and bus transportation; upgrade utilities and resource sea-supported industry.

Action: Coordinate with NH Port Authority on marine issues.

- Strategy 2: Ensure development in industrial district allows full expansion of waterfront industry and that conflicting uses in industrial zone are removed so that full use of waterfront is ensured.

Action: Review zoning uses for full compatibility for expanding waterfront into industry/office zones.

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**Policy 5: Seek a range of housing appropriate for a high land value area, recognizing issues highlighted in the box, below.**

- Strategy 1: Encourage flexible design and siting in the development of new housing.

Action: Review land use regulations to identify opportunities for zoning to regulate the design and location of a use based on site characteristics.

- Strategy 2: Support housing options, such as accessory dwelling units, duplex structures, and age-restricted housing developments to provide housing opportunities to a wide spectrum of residents.

Action: Review land use regulations to enable different types of housing in Newington consistent with the town's rural character.

Action: Maintain a low tax rate to help residents offset the region's high home assessments.

**Issues that diminish the available land and density choices for and supply of housing in the town of Newington:**

**Outside federal and state agencies have precluded residential housing in over 55% of Newington's land.**

NH-PDA reclassified the town and Pease AFB designated 30-unit mobile home site as non-residential.

NH-DOT purchased drive-in theater lot town discussed for high density housing (16 acres w/sewer).

NH-Port Authority has taken over very large acreages for aviation runway and Spaulding Turnpike/Interstate highway.

**Federal Dept of Interior, State Fish & Game, and Town of Newington have preserved forest, fields, prime wetlands with buffers, and open space for conservation and wildlife home habitat that precludes residential development.**

Reflects the higher priority for conservation of estuarian reserve, wetlands, and wildlife habitats for these locations than the value to state/town for residential and affordable housing.

**Safety considerations limit non-residential zones and immediate transition areas to no or low-density housing.**

Industrial, waterfront areas have high level noise, hazardous materials, and dangerous traffic mix.

Pease Tradeport aviation has crash hazard that limits housing density for safety & noise.

**Newington waste treatment plant designed for industrial waste with limited residential sewer mix.**

Lacks land for expansion to add additional tanks and filtration for full town sewage treatment.

Distributed additional buildout land available make running long sewer lines cost prohibitive.

Much bay-level land in south Newington has poor draining soils not supporting septic systems.

**Newington's low tax rate and elderly & low-income exemptions shield older, lower income residents from displacement widespread in other high-land value towns in southern New Hampshire**

**Newington allows most single-family home sites to add an accessory dwelling unit but requires 50% more land for new 2-unit dwellings.**

**Scarcity of land and short access to high paying job locations make residential land values very high (\$200K+)**

High costs and low-density restrictions result in affordable housing development as not cost effective

Town too small (and lacks interest in operating/subsidizing a town housing authority).

**Policy 6: Maintain and develop community services and facilities in a manner consistent with orderly growth and Newington’s rural character, while not placing a financial burden on the community.**

- Strategy 1: Review findings from the Master Plan community survey and visioning sessions to identify priority programs and services as expressed by Newington residents.

Action: Undertake community conversations to fully define financial impacts of services most desired by residents, including recreational programs as well as governmental services.

- Strategy 2: Assess the present status of all municipally-owned buildings and determine if they adequately provide services for residents.

Action: Develop an inventory of municipally owned-buildings and municipally-led programs to gain a better understanding of current resources, determine what resources are in demand, and what resources/programs are lacking.

Action: Update the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

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**Policy 7: Protect the shorelines and tributaries of Great Bay, Little Bay, and Piscataqua River while improving access for all.**

- Strategy 1: Plan carefully with regards to development along the estuary to minimize the risk of shoreline erosion.

Action: Consult the Town's Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment produced by the Rockingham Planning Commission to identify shoreline areas and infrastructure at risk of coastal flooding, storm surge, and erosion, and identify inland migration routes for shoreline habitats to adapt as water levels rise.

- Strategy 2: Enhance access to the waterfront, especially pedestrian and bicycle access, and take steps to increase the number of public access points.

Action: Develop a management plan for Fox Point and other shorefront recreation areas managed by the Town to enable greater resident access and manage use to prevent erosion and habitat degradation.

- Strategy 3: Support and defend Great Bay as a National Estuarine Reserve, a national network of protected areas that promote long-term research, education and stewardship.

Action: Enforce local land use regulations to ensure land use development does not negatively impact the natural and cultural resources of Great Bay.

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**Policy 8: Protect Newington’s historic architecture, scenic fields & forests, and cultural heritage.**

- Strategy 1: Boost awareness of the historic character and ambience of Newington’s Old Town Center.

Action: Leverage limited municipal funding for preservation by seeking historic and cultural preservation grant funds from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program.

- Strategy 2: Preserve farmlands, forests, and open space associated with the Town Forest at Town Center and the Knights Brook corridor to the northwest.

Action: Work with landowners and regional land conservation organizations to preserve these prioritized parcels through conservation easement and land purchase.

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