



City of Portsmouth Economic Development Commission 2009 Action Plan

Statement of Purpose:

The City of Portsmouth Economic Development Commission (EDC) is committed to ensuring continued economic prosperity, sustainability and preservation of the qualities that attract and retain businesses in the community. To accomplish this mission, the Commission has developed the following set of broad goals that embody the mission of the EDC. Some of the objectives and action steps reflect long-term initiatives and remain unchanged from the previous year. Others reflect short-term initiatives tied to specific benchmarks and funding sources. Economic development goals from the recently updated City Master Plan are also incorporated in the document with the Master Plan reference number of the goal noted in parentheses.

In reviewing goals and objectives for this year, the EDC selected the following topics as 2009 priorities. These items have been incorporated in the text of the short-term action plan goals.

- Islington Street Corridor Improvement Plan
- Exit 7 Gateway Improvements Conceptual Plan
- Implementation of Northern Tier Feasibility Study
- Public Private Partnerships
- Workforce Housing
- Wayfinding
- Business retention
- Green Job Opportunities

2009 SHORT-TERM EDC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Maintain and enhance the City's value and vitality through infrastructure improvement.

Objective: Complete Islington Street Corridor Study Action Plan

Action Plan:

- Complete plan and educate public officials and corridor stakeholders on funding and implementation process.
- Continue to explore long-term funding opportunities including Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Tax Increment Financing Districts, and other financing tools for long and short-term corridor improvement projects.
- Meet with Planning Board to discuss corridor re-zoning needed to implement plan goals. Focus on height allowance for Islington Street properties located in the CBD.
- Advocate for CIP funding for design/construction of improvements.

Objective: Implement Exit 7 Gateway Improvements Conceptual Plan

Action Plan:

- Advocate for CIP funding for construction plans of proposed gateway improvements.

Objective: City Wayfinding Project

Action Plan:

- Where appropriate, assist staff in generating business involvement in the project and provide input to consultant on wayfinding design concepts.

Goal 2: Create and sustain public/private partnerships with businesses aimed at fostering economic development that complements Portsmouth's quality of life and revitalizes existing business areas.

Objective: Implement the concepts outlined in the Northern Tier Feasibility Study.

Action Plan:

- For permitted projects, assist developers in attracting investors and business tenants.
- Become familiar with construction mitigation plans for projects in Northern Tier.
- Educate public officials and business community about the need and advocate for long-range planning for additional parking in the Northern Tier area.
- Work with Northern Tier property owners/developers on incorporating elements of Northern Tier Feasibility Study into proposed and permitted developments in Northern Tier.

Objective: Continue the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce.

Action Plan:

- Evaluate quarterly reports and identify which tourism programs are effective and which need improvement. Modify the partnership terms accordingly.
- Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce and Port Director on hosting cruise ships to Portsmouth. Do post-visit interviews with visiting cruise lines.

Objective: Expand free WiFi in CBD

Action Plan:

- Receive updates on installation of Cisco equipment for phase 1 implementation.
- Work with Chamber of Commerce, UNH Interoperability Lab and business partners to coordinate "living lab" application of WiFi project.
- Request EDC representation on WiFi committee to evaluate usage data and to determine value in continuing WiFi expansion in the CBD.
- Help chart phased expansion and funding sources.

Goal 3: Establish Portsmouth as a prime location to establish a "green business" Green Economy Initiative

Objective: Collaboratively develop plan for green business expansion and attraction

Action Plan:

- Learn from successful communities identified in Dr. Ross Gittel's Green Jobs Report and determine opportunities for local application.
- Work with the Whittemore School at UNH and City's Sustainability Committee to develop action steps needed to capitalize on local workforce, business and university program and become a leader in the green economy.
- Evaluate the potential of a local green business incubator.
- Identify the workforce training needs of potential green business and work with local educational institutions (including the high school) to develop training in accordance with needs.
- Research federal stimulus programs for green economy opportunities.

Goal 4: Advocate for workforce housing

Objective: Promote continued development of diverse housing options affordable to persons within a wide range of income.

Action Plan:

- Review Housing Committee Report and determine how EDC can assist in advocating for, or implementing report goals.
- Proactively work with the Planning Board on an approach to working with neighborhoods on potential workforce housing sites.

Goal 5: Create/Maintain business association collaborations

Objective: Engage business groups to collaborate on economic vitality actions

Action Plan:

- Evaluate how to best interface and work with local Downtown Business Associations to increase participation, unified involvement of CBD businesses and possibly consolidation of efforts of various retail business groups.
- Support and assist in Seacoast Local's efforts to educate the business and residential community on the benefits of buying from locally-owned businesses.

Goal 6: Undertake targeted business retention activities

Objective: Support local business needs

Action Plan:

- Continue practice of inviting the city's largest employers to EDC meetings to discuss workforce needs, business concerns and growth opportunities.

EDC 2009 Action Plan

- Identify and visit select businesses to better understand local operations, workforce skills, needs and role in local economic vitality.
- When appropriate and affordable, participate in International Trade Resource Center events to attract foreign business.
- Improve business attraction packet.

LONG-TERM EDC OBJECTIVES

1. PROMOTE LOCAL BUSINESSES AND WORKFORCE

Objective: Improve the economic well being and quality of life within the community by providing jobs and increasing the tax base. By quality of life we mean offering residents opportunities for jobs with livable wages and good government services such as excellent schools, low crime, a stabilized tax rate, well-maintained parks and facilities for recreation. It also means providing for the welfare of all residents regardless of income.

Objective: Encourage businesses to train and hire local residents.

Action plan:

- To the extent that local labor markets cannot serve new industry, work with local educational institutions, NH Job Training Council and the NH Technical College to develop and sustain an adequate workforce.
- Support school to work programs involving local schools and businesses.
- Work with employers to identify training needs and access Workforce Training grants where appropriate.
- Create business internship opportunities and through education collaborations.

Objective: Promote and employ a policy whereby the City purchases goods and services from local businesses.

Action:

- Support the City's purchasing policy of patronizing and retaining local business for contracts and acquisitions of City goods and professional services.
- Support the Portsmouth ala Carte Program.

2. PROMOTE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Objective: Support Capital Improvement Plan items that improve public infrastructure and specifically that enhance the local transportation network, improve traffic circulation and signalization.

Action Plan:

- Raise awareness of the importance of public infrastructure as an economic development asset of the community as it relates to quality of life. Highlight the community's commitment to long-term investment in its infrastructure in the City marketing materials.
- When appropriate, EDC member attends CIP and annual budget public hearings to encourage the City to allocate sufficient resources for adequate park and facility maintenance and revitalization.
- Work with City Transportation Engineer to secure grants for implementation.
- Employ economic revitalization tools (TIF, etc) as matching or alternative funding sources for improvements.
- Work with the city and state representatives on transforming the City's main transportation corridors (Route 1, Lafayette Rd, Islington St.) by enhancing their appearance, encouraging a mix of uses and promoting transit oriented centers that are pedestrian-friendly. (LU-5)

Objective: Sustain the vitality and enhance the attractiveness of Market Square through ongoing improvements.

Action plan:

- Support funding for ongoing maintenance of Market Square for purchase of additional trash receptacles and replacement of worn benches.
- Using in-kind city services, support local events that bring vitality downtown such as Pro-Portsmouth's Market Square event and Summer in the Street series, the Portsmouth Criteria, the Halloween and Christmas parades, Bow Street Art Fair and the Buy Local Street Fair.
- Support zoning that encourages creation of additional areas for outdoor seating. (ED-2.1)

Objective: Continue long-range planning to increase parking in the city's central business district and public transit opportunities citywide.

Action Plan:

- Continue to promote public awareness of the benefits that result from adequate parking and transit opportunities in the central business district such as additional economic investment, impact on cultural community and smart growth practices.
- Promote shared parking facilities in city and at Pease Tradeport for uses with complementary demand (e.g., residential and commercial). (LU-1.3)
- Support the work of the city's Transportation Department and the Metropolitan Planning Organization in regional transportation planning initiatives that impact regional transit to and from the area through city staff or EDC input.

Objective: Continue to support efforts of the Regional Planning Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Organization to encourage the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to accelerate expansion of the General Sullivan Bridge and other local transportation bottlenecks.

Action Plan:

- Schedule updates of local and state transportation agencies' efforts to improve transportation into and out of the region.
- Send a representative of EDC to testify on behalf of the Commission at public hearings regarding the bridge improvement plan. Encourage public transportation, carpools, zipper lanes, and other means of intermodal transportation.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee to inform state representatives of the importance of timely bridge improvements to local economy.

3. Promote projects that maintain high environmental quality and sustainability.

Objective: Promote redevelopment of existing retail and commercial areas into mixed-use retail/office and research & development/office/industrial centers through zoning and infrastructure planning. (ED-1)

Action Plan:

- Promote redevelopment of existing shopping areas that upgrades the quality of the development and increases the mix of uses. (ED-1)
- Identify appropriate areas to modify zoning and/or circulation patterns so as to promote the development of more integrated centers (such as Islington Street/Jewel Ct. area). (ED1-1)
- Identify appropriate redevelopment sites capable of supporting establishment or relocation of large corporations. (ED-1.4)

Objective: Improve air quality locally by supporting the expansion of accessible, affordable and dependable trolley service. Promote mass transit citywide and in the

region.

Action Plan:

- Assist in obtaining federal/state transportation enhancement grants for intermodal initiatives.
- Continue to promote the City Park and Ride and trolley service through marketing materials.

Objective: Work collectively with Pease Tradeport to promote business development that is environmentally sound and sustainable.

Action Plan:

- Target “clean” businesses to market area.
- Focus on attracting companies that serve or enhance biotechnology by building a relationship with UNH and industry advocates in the region.

Objective: Where appropriate and cost effective, promote sustainable business and construction practices using the LEED certification model or something comparable.

Action Plan:

- Promote and highlight the city’s sustainability practices.
- Encourage business to consider LEED building development.
- Work with City staff to develop sustainability practice and development incentives.

4. IMPROVE BUSINESS DIVERSITY

Objective: Support and encourage independent small business as a significant component of the city’s overall business mix.

Action Plan:

- Support the “eCoast” initiative to promote the Seacoast for entrepreneurial businesses. (ED-1.2)
- Identify and promote locations for low-cost business start-ups (such as incubator spaces at Pease and 155 Fleet St.) and work with the Planning Board to support their development through appropriate zoning (ED1.3).

Objective: Promote business development that enhances the attractiveness of downtown, serving local needs as well as business and visitors.

Action Plan:

- Work with owners of Portwalk and other Northern Tier and CBD developments to recruit businesses that enhance the mix of downtown businesses including basic consumer goods and services.
- Support Planning Board efforts to maintain a strong housing component in the upper floors of downtown buildings and encourage retail and entertainment uses at the street level. (ED-2) and support zoning ordinance changes that accomplish this objective.

5. PROVIDE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Objective: Provide business assistance programs to local businesses.

Action Plan:

- When appropriate, make referrals to other business assistance organizations such the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), SCORE, Women’s

Business Center, State of NH Business Resource Center and the Micro-Credit program.

- Where appropriate, provide financial assistance through the UDAG Loan Program, through the use of the Business Finance Authority programs and through referrals to conventional and non-conventional lenders.
- Respond to businesses seeking information about relocation or expansion in Portsmouth. Update marketing materials as needed.
- Where warranted, assist businesses in use of the manufacturing extension partnership (MEP) and federal procurement assistance.

6. PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Objective: Support capital improvement plan as a means of meeting the city's capital needs and a sound economic development practice.

Action Plan:

- Identify capital needs that will enhance local business climate and go on record to support Capital Improvement Plan at Planning Board public hearing.
- Whenever feasible, identify grant sources to supplement cost of City projects.
- Whenever possible partner with local business to leverage costs of business development.
- Research and apply for economic development grants to offset and leverage municipal funds for economic development.

Objective: Within the stated UDAG Expenditure Policy, allocate UDAG funds to leverage other private and public funds for economic development projects.

Objective: Promote highest and best use of developable land and re-developable property as a means of expanding the City's tax base.

Action Plan:

When appropriate, EDC should advocate for highest and best business development before land use boards.

7. CREATE/MAINTAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCES

Objective: Sustain EDC alliances created with the local business organizations by having EDC representatives attend strategic meetings of the following groups:

Pease Development Authority	eCoast Roundtable
NH State Port Advisory Board	Chamber of Commerce
City Cultural Commission	Pease Tenant's Association
Local Downtown Business Associations	NH Dept. of Resources and Econ. Dev.
Rockingham Economic Development Corp.	Local Universities

Action Plan:

- Maintain EDC liaisons to identified organizations, monitor activities and attend meetings as appropriate.
- Invite representatives to EDC meeting to give update on organizations' important activities.
- Appoint EDC staff and/or EDC member to represent the city and participate in the Comprehensive Economic Strategy (CEDS) update of Rockingham Economic

Development Corporation.

Objective: Support the creative and cultural sector of the Portsmouth economy.

Action Plan:

- Recognize and sustain the contribution the Arts and Culture sector makes to the local economy. Incorporate this into city marketing efforts.
- Continue support of City Cultural Commission in implementation of the Cultural Plan.
- Provide a forum for the City Cultural Commission to provide semi-annual progress reports on the economic impact of their work plan and to inform business and residents of the economic impact of the local cultural community to local residents
- Continue to inform the City Council and the community on the value and impact of the Chamber partnership.

8. DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR MCINTYRE BLOCK REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

Objective: Play a leading role in project administration.

Action Plan:

- Provide policy guidance and potential UDAG funding for project.
- Work with City Manager and City Council on RFP for redevelopment consultants.
- Work with the public, stakeholders, the City Council and other city boards and commissions on soliciting public input and on project planning and implementation.