



City of Portsmouth Economic Development Commission 2011 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 2011 priorities. These items have been incorporated in the text of the short-term action plan goals.

- Economic Alliances
- Business Retention/Attraction
- Tourism
- Parking Zoning Amendments and Economic Vitality
- Subcommittee Work
- Public/Private Partnerships for Tourism, Culture and Development
- Economic Indicator Reporting

2011 SHORT-TERM EDC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

Objective: Implement Islington Street Corridor Study Action Plan

Action Plan:

- Promote action items identified for the near term (i.e. Maplewood Avenue/Bridge St. gateway park, location and design of curb bump-outs, crosswalks, bus turnouts, etc).
- Discuss development of a façade improvement program.
 - Determine demand for such a program.
 - Determine potential funding sources and structure.
- 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.
- Advocate for CIP funding for design/construction of improvements.

Objective: Promote Exit 7 Gateway Improvements

Action Plan:

- Promote future CIP and transportation enhancement grant funding for construction plan development and construction of proposed gateway improvements.

Objective: City Wayfinding Project

Action Plan:

- Promote project implementation and funding for the project phases in the CIP and through transportation enhancement grants.

Objective: Promote development of adequate parking facilities in the Central Business District.

Action Plan:

- Support the recommendation of the Parking Focus Group Report to construct a public parking garage at the Worth Lot for additional affordable and convenient downtown parking.
- Work with the Planning Board and Parking Committee on parking requirements for the downtown that create balanced commercial and residential development and maintains the economic vitality of the Central Business District.

Objective: Advocate for inter-municipal bridge transportation projects

Action Plan:

- Follow the status of the ME-NH Bridge replacement funding committee and provide support as appropriate.
- Invite NHDOT to provide update on Little Bay Bridges Improvement Project and advocate for future state DOT funding of the project through elected officials.

Goal 2: Create and sustain public/private partnerships with businesses to foster economic vitality and complement quality of life.

Objective: Promote development in the Northern Tier in accordance with the Northern Tier Feasibility Study.

Action Plan:

- Assist project developers in attracting investors and business tenants.
- Become familiar with construction mitigation plans for projects in Northern Tier and when appropriate respond to business concerns.
- Promote development of a 750-1000 seat conference center downtown.

Objective: Extend the tourism partnership with the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce.

Action Plan:

- Participate in the Destination Portsmouth effort to develop a marketing plan that maximizes the number of tourism visits to Portsmouth and optimizes the economic impact of each visit.
- Encourage Chamber to prioritize promotion of local cultural amenities.

Objective: Work with providers to create adequate telecommunication bandwidth as a means to attract and grow technology businesses.

Action Plan:

- Complete the work of the EDC subcommittee on future broadband needs and make recommendations to City Council.

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:

- 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.
- Establish a subcommittee to determine the best way to promote sustainable business development.
 - Raise awareness and support of existing groups such as Green Alliance Businesses for Social Responsibility and Green Pease.
 - Track the business outcomes of the Green Launching Pad program and encourage participants to locate businesses in the City.
- Determine if there are ways to assist the NHICC at Pease Tradeport in its incubation and mentoring of microenterprise business.
- 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.
- Promote the city's sustainability accomplishments and successful existing green businesses in business attraction literature.

Goal 4: Create/Maintain business alliances

Objective: Engage business groups to collaborate on economic vitality actions

Action Plan:

- Maintain and enhance current economic alliances with Pease Development Authority, local Downtown Business Associations, Seacoast Local, Commercial

Industrial Board of Realtors (CIBOR), and Rockingham Economic Development Corp.

- Increase reports from the PDA Executive Director to semi-annually to better understand ongoing development and learn about new companies at the Pease International Tradeport,
- Expand the connections and economic development opportunities with local universities and colleges (Great Bay Community College, UNH).

Goal 5: Undertake targeted business retention/attraction/job creation activities

Objective: Support local business needs

Action Plan:

- Invite representatives of the city's largest employers to EDC meetings to discuss workforce needs, business concerns and growth opportunities.
- Visit select businesses to better understand local operations, workforce skills, needs and role in local economic vitality.
- Conduct seminar on Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) tax credit seminar.
- Improve business attraction packet.
- Develop a strategy to attract small office users to the downtown.
- Propose parking garage discounts in the new Worth Lot Garage for companies locating downtown.
- Develop a strategy for "economic gardening" to encourage entrepreneurs to locate to Portsmouth and assist those companies to remain and grow here.
- Implement recommendations of the film subcommittee aimed at supporting and expanding the local film industry.
- Create a UDAG loan program for small business modeled after the PEDLP program.
- Prepare a semi annual economic conditions and indicator report and present it to the City Council.

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 Great Bay Community 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 Seacoast Local and Portsmouth ala Carte Programs.

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, attend CIP and annual budget public hearings to encourage the City to allocate sufficient resources for adequate, affordable parking and facility maintenance.
- Promote 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)
- Implement the Islington St. Action Plan improvements.

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, Portsmouth Criterion, 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: Promote long-range planning to increase parking in the city's Central Business District and public transit opportunities citywide.

Action Plan:

- Promote public awareness of the benefits that result from adequate parking and public transit.
- 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.

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 improvements to pedestrian ways and expansion of accessible, affordable and dependable trolley service. Promote mass transit and walkability 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 for marketing.
- Focus on attracting companies that serve or enhance technology 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 technology businesses. (ED-1.2)
- Identify and promote locations for low-cost business start-ups 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 balanced commercial and residential development 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, 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 with the following local business organizations:

Pease Development Authority	Seacoast Local
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:

- 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

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.

EDC 2011 Action Plan

- 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.

**PORTSMOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
2011 ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES**

Economic Alliances

- Expand the connections with local universities and colleges (Great Bay Community College, UNH, SNHU etc.).

Economic Reporting

- Increase reports from the Pease Development Authority (PDA) Executive Director from annually to semi-annually.
- Prepare a semi annual economic conditions and indicator report and present it to the City Council.

Business Retention

- Conduct visits to local companies for outreach, appreciation, and knowledge of local business and workforce needs.
- Conduct seminar on Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) tax credit seminar.

Business Attraction

- Develop a strategy to attract small office users to the downtown.
- Propose parking garage discounts in the new Worth Lot Garage for companies locating downtown.

Business Development

- Promote development of a 750-1000 seat conference center.

Public Private Partnerships

- Extend partnership for Chamber of Commerce Tourism Program and encourage increased promotion of Portsmouth cultural and historic attractions.
- Continue partnership with Art-Speak and promote American for the Arts Economic Impact Study.

Parking

- Promote public parking garage at the Worth Lot for additional affordable and convenient downtown parking.
- Promote downtown parking requirements that create balanced commercial and residential development.

EDC Subcommittee Tasks

- Complete the work of the EDC subcommittee on film business development.
- Complete the work of the EDC subcommittee on future broadband needs.
- Establish a subcommittee to discuss creation of a UDAG-funded loan/grant program.
- Establish a subcommittee to determine the best way to promote sustainable business development.