



# portsmouth listens...

2015 MASTER PLAN REVIEW  
STUDY CIRCLE DIALOGUE  
FINAL REPORTS • THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2015

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2003, Portsmouth Listens convened a series of study circles to assist the City of Portsmouth in reviewing the City’s Master Plan. The effort was guided by a simple question:

*“How can we make Portsmouth the best place to live and work for everyone?”*

The resulting input was a vital part of the 2005 Master Plan. That plan set an ambitious agenda for the community that went far beyond “bricks and mortar” planning to establishing a desired quality of life for everyone.

By New Hampshire law, every community must review its Master Plan every ten years. The city once again turned to Portsmouth Listens to create a community dialogue to generate input for the 2015 Master Plan review process. Over a five week period in May and June, 130 community members were assigned to eleven facilitated groups to again consider:

*“How can we make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?”*

Each group met at least four times in two-hour sessions to generate its findings and recommendations for the Portsmouth Planning Board to consider in preparing Portsmouth’s new Master Plan. The goal was to generate input for two Master Plan issues: the vision statement and the priorities for action over the next ten years. To assist them in the process, each group was asked to consider and answer the following questions:

- 1. How has Portsmouth evolved over the years?
- 2. What has been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?
- 3. What has not been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?
- 4. What do we want Portsmouth to be like and look like in 2025?
- 5. What, if any, changes should be made to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement?
- 6. What are the “Priorities for Action” that will make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone in 2025?

The Study Circles’ findings and recommendations are set out on the following pages. In Section II, each group’s final report sets out and explains their findings and recommendations for the vision statement and priorities for action for the next ten years. Section III includes each group’s findings and responses to the six questions that guided their deliberations. There is a template for each question that includes each group’s responses to each question.

As a means of expanding community involvement and input in this process, Portsmouth Listens created an online process. Study Circle participants and the general public were invited to review all of the group reports online, and then vote for their priorities on the “online clothes line”. This is the very same process used by study circles to set priorities. This voting is going on between June 16-24 and will be reported at the Planning Board meeting of June 24. Residents can vote on priorities for Portsmouth’s future online at [www.portsmouthlistens.org](http://www.portsmouthlistens.org).

Please take the time to read through all of the reports and review all of the templates. They include some very interesting and inspiring details. Take some time to give due consideration to the issues and recommendations. How do they impact you? Our community? Then get involved in the ongoing Master Plan review and doing whatever you can “to make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone!”

Portsmouth Listens would like to thank the city for the invitation to once again participate in the Master Plan review process. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation for all of the participants. Through your more than 1,000 hours of deliberation, you have demonstrated the value of the “collective wisdom” of our community. We are particularly grateful to our fourteen facilitators who are the heart and soul of all dialogue. You are the best and we could not have done it without you!

## II. STUDY CIRCLE GROUP FINAL REPORTS

Each of the eleven study circle groups filed a report explaining its findings and recommendations. The reports focus on changes to the Vision Statement and Priorities for Actions in the upcoming Master Plan. Here are their reports.

### Final Report: Day Group

**GROUP:** Jane Begala, Phyllis Eldridge, Carol Lincoln, Pat Shea, Michael Shea, Laura Spelke, Sherwood Spelke, Lisa Sweet, Walter Hamilton, Bob Vaccaro, Carol Welsh

**FACILITATORS:** Anne Romney and Diane Stradling

**INTRODUCTION:** Members of this group addressed all the discussion points in the Guide. As a group, we were able to list the positive changes over the last ten years and where Portsmouth fell short of the vision in the 2005 Master Plan. Finally we were able to all agree on what we would like to have included in the 2015 Master Plan Vision Statement to preserve Portsmouth's vibrancy and diversity. We appreciated the opportunity to be heard and to be able to provide feedback on the desired direction for the city.

**THE 2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:** "Portsmouth is a diverse, vibrant city which integrates a systems approach to planning that balances environmental, societal and economic criteria in setting priorities. It is built around a commitment to the vitality and strength of both our downtown and neighborhoods. Portsmouth is a leader in implementing policies for significantly reducing our carbon footprint. Protecting our working and recreational waterfront and promoting accessible green spaces in all neighborhoods is a priority. Portsmouth develops policies which produce a diversity of housing and employment opportunities for all economic levels. It promotes neighborhood connectedness through multiple and innovative modes of transportation that provide safe walking and biking routes to all locations. It supports local arts, history, culture and lifelong learning through community building activities and educational opportunities to all of our citizens. In these ways, Portsmouth strives to be an inclusive and sustainable community."

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** Portsmouth should continue to build on being a welcoming, historically and culturally rich and beautiful city. In applying the systems approach, increased moderation and balance should be the guiding principles. While business development and tourism are important, building scale, traffic and pedestrian congestion, economic, cultural and ethnic

diversity, and sustainability must be prioritized. Transparency in the decision making process is essential for public understanding and support. Protecting its working and recreational waterfront is a priority.

Continuing the progress on making the city more walkable and bikeable and exploring public transportation are important priorities. Focus on downtown has created a beautiful and vibrant heart of our city. We must also consider the needs of all neighborhoods and areas and work toward making them readily and safely interconnected. Including green spaces in all areas of the city is important and should be a priority for any development. Finally, we must strengthen planning processes to ensure neighborhood input into these and other revitalization efforts.

The city has incorporated sustainable practices into decisions and priorities; however, there are many more challenges. Portsmouth can and should be a model community providing education, policies and incentives for achieving carbon neutrality. Upgrading the waste water treatment plant in a timely manner is critical.

In order to encourage diversity and sustainability, making Portsmouth accessible to all income levels is imperative. Portsmouth appears to have been successful in providing housing to low and high income groups. However, there needs to be greater focus on attracting young, middle income people and families through increased professional job opportunities and affordable housing.

Providing the infrastructure that promotes health, community and lifelong learning must be a high priority. It is important that access to health information and services as well as other social supports are available. Continuing public school support is critical but also important are lifelong learning activities for all its citizens. Providing a community / senior center is critical to meeting these goals.

Portsmouth is a vibrant city. While welcoming businesses and visitors, it is imperative that we retain Portsmouth's history, culture, charm, values and focus on its residents.

### Final Report: Group A

**GROUP A:** Zoe Kirkpatrick, Jessica White, Ann Roskey, Brendan White, Carol Hollis, Debbie Needleman, Inga Wyman, James Hewitt, Deanna Strand, Leslie Brenner, and Cristy Cardoso

**FACILITATOR:** Bert Cohen

**INTRODUCTION:** Our group was made up entirely of Portsmouth residents from all over the city, from down-

town and its immediate surrounding neighborhoods to Christian Shore, the West End and the Ocean Road area, and included both retirees and working professionals, as well as longtime residents and those new to the area. Our group had a wealth of experience with Portsmouth life, including members who experienced Portsmouth's schools firsthand as students, members with current school aged children, those with grown children who attended local schools and participated in youth programs along with younger people hoping to start their families here. Additionally, our group had diverse work and volunteer experience and a strong desire to be actively involved in its community. Group members had experience ranging from hospitality, finance, education, technology and nonprofit management to the arts. Many are involved in citizen government, committees and board memberships of not-for-profit organizations.

**THE 2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:** Portsmouth will should be a livable, walkable city that preserves its history, preserves lives in balance with its natural resources, protects the public's access to its waterfront and views, provides a supportive environment good climate for entrepreneurial opportunity, acts on its belief in socio-economic diversity through diverse housing options affordable housing and connects neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation. Portsmouth will actively should consciously support its local arts and culture and take steps to will build community through citywide events, enhanced and beautified public spaces and streetscapes common living and recreating spaces and neighborhood connectedness. In these ways, Portsmouth will remain the most historic and most vibrant passionate city in New Hampshire.

Our group felt that the vision statement should more forcefully state the intended goals, so the term "should" was replaced with "will" wherever possible. When debating the meaning of "liveable" we came to an understanding that the concepts of affordability, access and opportunity for all applied, and our edits throughout reflect these concepts. Beyond sustainable practices, preserving public access to open spaces and the waterfront were highlighted as a need for the future. Affordability was identified in our discussion as something broader than just low income or workforce housing, so the idea of diverse housing options was added to the vision. Additionally, "common living" was replaced with "public spaces" to again emphasize the need to preserve the public's access to community amenities. Lastly, we recognized that a city becomes vibrant when the passions of its citizens are expressed.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** When considering priorities for action, the group attempted to frame the discussion around a systems approach that considered the Economy, Natural Environment, and Society. However,



through discussion we realized that many of our priorities touch on all three concepts in some way.

- Economic Diversity (tied for first)
- Invest In, Connect and Enliven all parts of Portsmouth (tied for first)
- Citizen Input into Decision-making Process
- Resource Protection and Sustainability

At the top of our priorities list were Economic Diversity and Invest in, Connect and Enliven all parts of Portsmouth. By Economic Diversity, we mean that Portsmouth needs diverse, affordable opportunities for businesses, organizations and nonprofits of all sizes and an adequate supply of diverse housing options for all economic levels. The cost of doing business in our downtown is out of reach for the typical entrepreneur and office parks such as Pease are not suitable for artists, small businesses and many non-profits. Additionally, to meet the housing demands of both a thriving tourism industry and a regional jobs center like Pease, Portsmouth needs to find ways to encourage not only low income and workforce housing but naturally affordable housing and increase its long-term rental inventory. By encouraging diverse housing options such as accessory apartments, in-law suites, converted carriage houses or garages and backyard tiny homes, Portsmouth would give current residents the opportunity to stay here, young people a reason to return after college and elderly residents the opportunity to age in place.

Just as important is the need to Invest In, Connect and Enliven all parts of Portsmouth. What we are saying again here is to make all of Portsmouth as special as downtown is by spreading out infrastructure investments such as curbing, sidewalks, storm drains, traffic calming and public transportation to improve walkability and bikeability throughout the city. As community assets have relocated away from the center of town and our downtown has become a center for tourism, not day-to-day community life, it is important that we find a way to reconnect residents and to make our community assets more accessible to everyone.

Second on our list of priorities is Citizen Input into Decision-making Process. The value of this process was discussed and a desire to see Portsmouth expand the effectiveness of getting citizen input into decision-making processes arose. This could mean many things, including more deliberative dialogues like this one or ward representation on our City Council, but it does mean more than simply allowing the public to comment at meetings before a final vote.

Lastly, we wanted to signal that Resource Protection and Sustainability were still a priority. Protecting open spaces and the waterfront, ensuring access to them and investing in bicycling and walking paths are a priority, as are policy issues regarding energy, pollution, recycling and waste and other sustainable practices by the city.

## Final Report: Group B

**GROUP:** Steve Alie, Kirsten Barton (Note taker), Jennifer Bell, Kathleen Bergeron, Jennifer Brewer, Jolanda Fannin, Sarah Lachance, Cliff Lazenby, Kendree Parker, Jody Record, Karin Scott, John Sheehan.

**FACILITATOR:** Maura Zigmont

**INTRODUCTION:** The group participants live and/or work in Portsmouth. The group followed the study circle discussion guide and process in four two-hour sessions 6/3-6/28/15 at the Portsmouth High School library.

**THE 2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:** In Session #2, the group initially reviewed the 2005 vision statement for feedback. The group would like the statement to reference all types of populations (aging, working class) and put more emphasis on business (drawing business, tourism, jobs). In critiquing the current statement to represent modern day, the group thought ‘multiple modes of transportation’ may be too broad, there is too much emphasis on just Downtown Portsmouth, ‘affordable housing’ may be too narrow, and adding Portsmouth has the opportunity to be a regional leader.

In Session #3, the group edited the existing vision statement and voted on its top five edits which are listed in Template E. Overall, the group selected alternative verbs to address gaps, broaden scope, and increase inclusiveness. Specifically, the group recommends:

- ‘Portsmouth should be a city that honors (vs. preserves) its history’ because honors feels more dynamic-more of a relationship between that which is historic and the community as a whole. Also, the requirements to preserve historical housing can be costly to residents and delay upkeep. Are there more affordable options that can still honor the history?

- ‘Lives in balance with its eco systems (vs. natural resources)’ to describe the interaction of the biological community and its natural environment.

- ‘Protects its waterfront and open space (vs. views)’ to better indicate undeveloped Portsmouth land accessible to the public.

- ‘Supports and attracts (vs. provides a good climate) entrepreneurial opportunity’ to show intentional city planning to draw and advance Portsmouth commerce.

- ‘Fosters a culture of socio-economic diversity (vs. Acts on its belief in socio-economic diversity through affordable housing)’ to indicate cultivating a city lifestyle of diversity beyond affordable housing.

Additionally, the group had ideas for updating the wording of the community parts of the current vision statement:

- ‘Connects all parts of the city (vs. neighborhoods) through multiple and innovative modes of transporta-

tion’ to broaden the all-city need for different types of transportation.

- ‘Actively build (vs. take steps to build) community through easily accessible information and civic involvement’ to address the need for improved town communication (timeliness of getting on the town newsletter distribution, available communication resources, the use of modern modes of communication, publicizing how to use waterways and trails) and improved civic involvement (address barriers to diverse civic involvement).

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** In Session #4, the group selected the top six areas for Portsmouth to focus on over the next ten years. These areas in order of most important and the discussion points are:

1. Develop Economic Diversity and Opportunity. The group recognized how Portsmouth evolved in this area: for example, the redevelopment of Pease, the expansion of Downtown into Islington Street. The group discussed several current economic gaps for the city to include: parking shortage partly due to expanded tourism and filled office space on top of lower retail levels, development management, building use, unsustainable transportation, supporting city areas other than downtown with thoughtful planning, affordable housing for the aging and the working class and creating a budget to implement the Master Plan. The group’s wish list for the city over the next ten years is for it to actively attract and support large and small business, change historic zoning /add cluster zoning, support an educated workforce, provide a living wage to all city workers, reduce barriers to economic opportunity, and make low income housing architecturally attractive. The group expressed a concern for diminished economic diversity in the city. In prior years, the city sustained a loss of the working class from the shipyard and the military. Portsmouth demographics show a large percentage of single-family homes and an increasing aging population. Portsmouth home prices are misaligned with working class salaries. For Portsmouth to be a ‘city for all’ it is important to provide affordable single-family, workforce, and senior housing. The group expanded on the housing needs of the city’s aging population. Is there enough small housing for seniors? If the city continues to expand senior housing, does it risk diversified housing? What are options for a child to take care of an aging parent in Portsmouth? There are restrictions for building in-law apartments. Seniors want to stay in their homes and need assistance in the home.

2. Invest In and Maintain Infrastructure. The group reflected on the evolution of Portsmouth in the prior years including walkability of downtown, new street lighting, wastewater management, parking garage, and bridges and roads. It discussed current city infrastructure needs of completing the full bike/ped master plan, addressing the Downtown parking shortage, creating sidewalks and bike lanes for all neighborhoods, and completing unfinished projects, i.e. West End, Northern Tier, and Frank Jones. Also, the group suggested innovations like electronic in-

formation kiosks for Downtown and good signage for city tourists to learn about the city. Lastly, the group encourages the city to establish a long-term infrastructure plan.

3. Arts, Culture, Recreation, and History. The group recognized positive gains in these areas such as increased recreational, cultural, educational, and knowledge sharing activities and events for all ages; more Portsmouth events that are affordable and accessible, saving the public pool, great collaboration between all art, history, and cultural agencies and sites, the pervasiveness of the arts and exceptional programs for children. The group would like to see a better balance between old and new buildings with new buildings that are innovative and complement, but not necessarily mimic or imitate historical styles. The group is concerned about the sustainability of historic building maintenance due to the expense of meeting historic building maintenance requirements.

4. Actively Build Community. While the city has fostered civic involvement over the years, the group perceives risks to the city community that include connectedness of diverse city groups, protecting the city life, and car use (vs. public transportation). In 2025, the group would like to see broad participation in the community, a forward thinking community and a city that attracts progressive residents. The group pointed out that there are ongoing city volunteer vacancies and civic involvement is from the same volunteers. This current state of civic participation does not represent broad city representation. It is important for the city to identify and address the reasons for the volunteer vacancies and hurdles or barriers to creating diverse participation (mixed ages, genders, ethnicities, economic levels, family-status). Is the volunteer sign up process a hassle? Is the time of volunteer participation inconvenient? Are volunteer openings well communicated to the residents? Additionally, the group discussed being intentional about fostering a healthy community and addressing current needs of serving an aging population and understanding the drug problem.

5. Environmentally Mindful. The group noticed the city has done a good job of maintaining public spaces and getting rid of the scrap metal. The group’s vision for Portsmouth is to retain the city’s open spaces (Prescott Park, Sagamore Creek, field near Portsmouth High School), consider future environmental impact of building and eco-systems and strive to be a regional leader in greenhouse gas emission reduction (carbon neutral).

6. Transportation. The group thinks city transportation is unsustainable. As the city becomes more heavily populated with visitors and development, alternatives to existing transportation should be on the city’s radar. Currently, there are long lines of outgoing commuter traffic from Portsmouth to Durham and Dover. The Portsmouth bus system is not adequately promoted to reduce morning weekday gridlock and carbon gas emissions. Younger adults are more likely to take public transportation and defer getting their license. Can the city offer public transportation vouchers to residents of apartment buildings?

Can we consider zip cars to model D.C.? The group describes the 2025 Portsmouth vision for transportation as affordable, innovative, accessible, walkable and bikeable.

# Final Report: Group C

**GROUP MEMBERS:** Rebecca and Tom Cunningham, Margot Doering, Richard Greenslade, Tim Hayes, Kerry and Tim Kenney, Jeffrey Kiesel, Mariah Morgan, Alyssa Murphy, Rebecca O’Brien and Stephen Viens

**FACILITATOR:** Maria Sillari

This was a well-rounded group of residents, living in both downtown and outlying neighborhoods. One of the strengths of the group is that participants provided input from varying perspectives – young families with children in school, singles, and empty-nesters. Some have lived in Portsmouth for decades, while others have been here for just a few years. Some work in the City, some outside the City, and others are retired. In spite of our varying demographics, the group was cohesive and professional. One thing we had in common is that we all are passionate about the City of Portsmouth and its future.

The group immediately reached consensus that Portsmouth is an outstanding place to live, work and play, and came up with a long list of examples of actions or events that have helped make Portsmouth such a great place. Following are the top examples in priority order of votes:

- 1. Prescott Park Arts Festival – free entertainment – and other arts organizations such as 3S.
- 1. Community Celebrations – Childrens’ Festival, Halloween Parade, Christmas Parade, Market Square Day.
- 2. Restaurants and hospitality culture.
- 3. Preserving the old/historic architecture
- 4. Civic recreation – pools, dog parks, walking and rec groups (numbering is intentional – tie for first place)

**THE 2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:**  
A running theme throughout our discussions was that Portsmouth is a small city, with big city problems. During our deliberations, a number of issues and questions were analyzed, including but not limited to the following:

- 1. The term “livable” is somewhat vague, and encompasses a multitude of undefined components (ex. affordable, inhabitable, non-polluted, crime-free...).
- 2. Beyond protection of our waterfront and views, they should be accessible.
- 3. Retention of, and attracting large businesses (Liberty Mutual, HCA Portsmouth Hospital, Highliner, etc.) as well as entrepreneurs. Discussion revolved around incorporating commercial/industrial opportunity as well as entrepreneurs. Group consensus was that this is a given, and does not need to be embedded in the Vision Statement.

4. The group agreed that the phrase “...acts on its belief in socioeconomic diversity” is too presumptive, and updating the Vision Statement to “...supports socioeconomic diversity” demonstrates a stronger commitment to this goal.

5. Our discussion regarding transportation was less about “connecting neighborhoods” and more about linking the outer rings of the City and surrounding towns and areas (the Greater Seacoast) into downtown.

6. A continuing theme of the discussions in our group was affordable housing - specifically that the tourism/ service industry is a critical component of our local economy, and the service industry employees and artists cannot afford to live in the City. The affordable housing issue carries over from the current Vision Statement, and the consensus of the group is to further strengthen our commitment to this vital area of our economy by updating the Vision Statement to read “Portsmouth should consciously take action to support its local arts and culture”.

7. The group agreed that there are many things the City does well, including building community through citywide events, enhanced and beautified common living and recreating spaces, and neighborhood connectedness. Therefore we recommend replacing the phrase “...take steps to build community” with “...continue to build community”.

8. All agreed without exception that the last sentence of the existing Vision Statement needed to either be reworded or removed in its entirety. After much discussion, the consensus was that since our charge was to make recommendations on a Vision Statement for the next ten years, we should commit to welcoming “innovative, forward thinking, and bold initiatives that spur the imagination and rally civic spirit”.

Accordingly, Portsmouth Listens Study Circle 2015 Group C recommends modification of the existing Vision Statement to read as follows:

“Portsmouth should be a livable, walkable city that preserves its history, lives in balance with its natural resources, protects public access to its waterfront and views, provides a good climate for entrepreneurial opportunity, and that supports socioeconomic diversity through affordable housing in Portsmouth, and public transportation connecting the Greater Seacoast area. Portsmouth should consciously take action to support its local arts and culture, and continue to build community through citywide events, enhanced and beautified common living and recreating spaces, and neighborhood connectedness. To achieve these ends, Portsmouth welcomes innovative, forward thinking, and bold initiatives that spur the imagination and rally civic spirit, resulting in a City to be proud of.”

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** As a prelude to the group deliberations concerning the establishment of Priorities for Action, it was productive for us to come up with what Portsmouth should look like in 2025, and in keeping

with our theme of a small city with big city problems, our discussions centered around the following:

- Transportation – Portsmouth should function like a city. Residents, workers and visitors should be able to get around without a car (bike, bus, light rail). Regional transportation is key, however political commitment is essential.
- Retention of our authenticity – blue/white collar, working port, arts and culture, small businesses, blend of tourism and hometown.
- Maintaining a welcoming and unique character. Inclusivity of neighborhoods. Safe common spaces. Common civic goals.
- Make other areas as special as Downtown is – multiple destinations within the City. Support unique neighborhoods.
- Preservation and expansion of open spaces both Downtown and throughout the City.
- Consider assigning City Councilors to each ward, so that each has an assigned councilor to advocate and answer for it. The intention here is not to limit who runs for council because they did not live in the “right” ward, or end up having sector voting, but rather to be sure that each ward has one or two councilors responsible for that ward. Direct connection to Neighborhood Associations.
- Natural Environment – planning in anticipation of sea level rise, new water treatment facility, noise control (trucks, motorcycles, music)
- Maintain protection and accessibility of open spaces.
- Waterfront – commercial fish pier, working port
- Blend of old and new architecture – preserve, but not mimic old construction.

In order to make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play in 2025, and to provide a roadmap for supporting our recommended Vision Statement, the group discussed multiple Priorities for Action. Our focus included but was not limited to the following:

- Addressing big city problems (homelessness, addiction, infrastructure, etc.)
- Mixed use housing, in an effort to avoid creating areas with bigger problems
- Taxes and fiscal responsibility – stewardship of the city’s fiscal resources in a manner that supports the Vision Statement
- Purposeful economic development
- Planning and Zoning
- Innovative, harmonious development within the Historic District (Savannah, GA was offered as an example)
- Purposeful preservation of open spaces – throughout the City and Downtown (preservation tax such as that established in Martha’s Vineyard/Nantucket was offered as an example)
- Not enough business and industry diversity – concern that the City may find itself in a “tourism bubble”
- Adequate recreation facilities

The members of Portsmouth Listens Study Circle 2015 Group C distilled the foregoing into what we suggest are the five top Priorities for Action necessary to support the recommended Vision Statement, and make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play in 2025:

1. Purposeful preservation and expansion of open and recreational spaces and the waterfront.
2. Retain authenticity – socioeconomic, cultural, racial, age, class diversity – through provision of affordable housing and adequate regional transportation.
3. Planning and Zoning policies that support:
  - a. Innovative, harmonious development
  - b. Affordable housing
  - c. Public transportation
4. Diversity of Business and Industry, other than Tourism.
5. Alignment of the use of fiscal resources in a manner that supports the Vision Statement.

## Final Report: Group D

**PARTICIPANTS:** Lily Beyer, Lauren Colanto, Marian Ellis, Russ Grazier, Carol Clark, Karen Andersen, Nancy Hamilton, Kim Rogers

**FACILITATOR:** Jeffrey Cooper

**INTRODUCTION:** Group D comprised a mixed group of ages, tenure as Portsmouth residents, professions and backgrounds. Professionally, we had a good mix: teachers, business leaders, art community leader, retirees, affordable housing advocate, and urban planner.

We also noted demographics not represented in the group:

- Elderly and/or disabled
- Real estate developers
- Newcomers buying high-end real estate
- Yourists/visitors
- Low income
- Disenfranchised citizens or those too busy to participate
- People who want to live in Portsmouth but can’t afford it

We made some effort to account for those not represented to the extent possible. For example, one member works in the tourist booth downtown and brought a sense of what visitors are looking for. For the most part, we reached consensus on statements and observations. Where we did not, we’ve made note.

Overall, the group felt that Portsmouth is doing a lot that’s right, resulting in our ever-diversifying economy, focus on citizen participation, sustainability and protecting the character and history of Portsmouth. Examples

are the process for developing character-based zoning, re-purposing of buildings such as the Visitor Center and Middle School, etc. Areas needing more focus were maintaining balance between economic, environmental and social needs on an ongoing basis.

However, there was also an undercurrent of feeling that Portsmouth may be becoming a victim of its own success as new money pours into the downtown area especially, and what that will mean for the treasured character of the city. There is a feeling of “small” locals and our working class being left behind, whether its long-term residents or local businesses and artists — with bigger money being made from high-end real estate, outside businesses expanding here and national/international artistic events. And while this trend has given us an enviable, vibrant commercial and creative economy, there’s a feeling that what’s been good for the overall economy has not always been good for local individuals. In the arts community especially, it’s felt that the ragged richness of the vibrant local arts scene of prior years has been steadily migrating to more affordable surrounding communities such as Kittery, Dover and Rollinsford. Ultimately, we fear losing the very things that make Portsmouth so appealing and we may end up cooking our own “golden goose.”

As mentioned, there is a sense that the three elements for sustainability noted in the Master Plan (Society, Environment and Economy) may have become unbalanced in favor of economic progress over the past ten years. While conditions in 2005 moved the city to (successfully) focus on the economy, group members feel it is important to scrupulously maintain that balance as we move forward. We thought it could be instantiated in a set of questions related to, ‘how do we balance this against the common good for Portsmouth?’ in all decisions.

### THE 2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:

Group D felt the Vision Statement in the Master Plan was on-target and comprehensive. The issue the group had was where they felt the City could take more concrete action to support the vision, specifically in the following areas excerpted from the vision statement:

- “...protects its water views...” — parts of the waterfront and views have been closed off by large, monolithic buildings such as the Martingale block. This group would like to see a priority placed on preserving remaining waterfront views and, where practical, public access. On that note, whatever takes the place of the former “rust pile” should take that into account. While there was disagreement over the type of enterprise that goes into that space, it was strongly felt that whether it’s a working waterfront or public space, it should preserve even some view to the waterfront rather than more high-end condos for a few blocking views for all the rest
- “...acts on its belief in socio-economic diversity through affordable housing...” — the vision is on target, though it was felt that not much concrete progress has been made on this. The group would like to see progress made through more inclusionary zoning laws with “teeth”,



consistently enforced through the planning and development process

- “...connects neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation...” — while there are private and public bus services, there is a desire to expand routes and bring back others (such as the beach trolley)
- “consciously support its local arts and culture...” — the local creative economy needs ongoing advocacy in the form of a staff position (could be part-time) similar to those for sustainability, bike/pedestrian planning, and elderly affairs. It was felt that since the creative economy contributes so significantly to Portsmouth’s economic vibrancy, the interests of that engine should be represented across city planning, development and policy structures. See details below.

- “... building community through .... events.... neighborhood connectedness...” — as advocated by recent planning design charettes, it is important within the planning/ development process to require public ways and public gathering places across and within neighborhoods to maintain connectedness between people in the city. However, this only addresses the physical landscape. Equally important are more processes and events that foster constructive discourse among diverse sets of opinion. The rich diversity and impassioned viewpoints we value in Portsmouth citizens seem to increasingly devolve to strident, accusatory rhetoric that is counterproductive to the participatory culture we want. The Portsmouth Listens process is an excellent example of a process where opposing opinions are respected and people feel heard, through facilitated discussion and calls to action.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:**

1. Continue to implement plans related to a more walkable, bikeable city, such as the comprehensive Portsmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, across the city, especially the Market St. Extension
2. Inclusionary zoning with “teeth” (for example, follow through on affordable and mixed housing requirements)
3. Take action on and even incentivize public and private innovative modes of transportation (gives access to local and regional attractions — beaches, Boston, Portland, Transportation Center, etc.), ability for non-car owners to get more places. Accessibility; adaptability for elderly and non-able-bodied
4. Elderly services: expand zoning to include assisted living opportunities in all areas of the city; aging in place. Affordability for elderly, make it possible to keep their houses while maintaining their standard of living via tax relief; review the current policy to ensure it is adequate
5. Arts and culture: higher level of support to maintain our creative economic engine. Really empower and fund Artspeak with Arts and Culture Commission, with a paid staff position (probably part-time, though needs to be someone with direct experience, not simply adding this to someone’s existing, unrelated job) to implement policy, recommendations, advise the city manager, EDC, arts and culture alliance, etc.) This would allow the arts to be fully

embraced as part of city planning. Current, successful models would be:

- Sustainability - Peter Britz
  - Elderly affairs — Brinn Chute
  - Bike/Pedestrian Plan — Juliet Walker
6. As part of the planning/development process, require even more public gathering and recreation spaces, not necessarily concentrated downtown, making it as inviting as possible, with greenspace and public art as part of the design. Seen as fostering community, where newcomers can assimilate, different age and economic groups can meet, and people feel less isolated
- Other ideas we considered are:
- Create parking strategies for specific demographic needs. Would require more detailed examination and analysis to determine a strategy where one size does not fit all, in order to maximize the parking inventory and better serve needs of all. Sample populations include:
    - Elderly
    - Neighborhoods/residents
    - Day workers
    - Tourists
    - Disabled

- In addition, we recommend:
- Review current status of resident periods, overnight, 3-day policies, snow removal
  - Requires ongoing monitoring (for example, the Deer St garage shouldn’t be seen as a panacea or even meeting all parking demand — satellite parking may still be needed)
  - Regulation and new economic/business models affecting the city:
    - Online/web-based entrepreneurial marketing and businesses (such as Uber and Air BnB) are only going to proliferate and spread to other industries — there’s no going back
    - We need to deepen this thoughtful discourse, as peer-to-peer and non-traditional business models continue to grow. It’s up to us to manage this change in business; one person’s opportunity is another’s threat. How do we address the conflict constructively and imaginatively
    - For example, should private transportation be de-regulated? Is it time to re-examine in light of changing definitions of business entities? Where is the trade-off between self-serving protectionism and public safety?
    - Parks/Open Spaces/Waterfront/View: A feeling we’ve lost our balance between economic development and environment and social priorities
    - How would we use a “means test” to resolve opposing interests that could get us out of balance. How can we continually, in real time, weigh new ideas and developments with the public good in mind without slowing down progress?
  - Housing
  - Mandate for mixed income for developers
  - Address minimum square feet
  - Parking

- Lot sizes and uses
- Public safety — seen as a new concern in the visioning process for Portsmouth; it was of enough concern to be included in discussions of the ten-year plan. Two aspects were discussed:
  - The drug epidemic and fears around the impact on the community and public safety.
  - A desire to stay ahead of “big-city” issues (crime, etc.) as the popularity of Portsmouth grows

# Final Report: Group E

**PARTICIPANTS:** Maxine Feintuch, Allen Norelli, Anna Bruning, Brenna Jennings, Brian Murphy, Christine Kelly, Denise Wheeler, Edward Quinn, Jan Phelps, Jeffrey Raume and Rick Becksted.

**FACILITATOR:** Robin Albert

**INTRODUCTION:** (General comments about the group and process).

**THE GROUP:** While we had a good diversity of occupations, ages, and tenure in the city, we were heavily skewed toward downtown residents. Realizing this, we tried to pay particular attention to the idea of connecting neighborhoods, and of “Making the Rest of Portsmouth as Special as Downtown.”

**THE PROCESS:** The Study Guide, with its templates for discussion and outcomes for each session, along with the materials distributed at the preliminary meeting, helped keep expectations clear. Our facilitator kept us on topic, while still allowing time for discussion. Everyone seemed willing to contribute to the conversations, and showed respect for diverse opinions.

**THE 2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:** (Discussion of changes or amendments to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement)

We see the 2005 vision statement as beautifully written, strong and optimistic; our suggestions attempt to add some “teeth.” We believe the Portsmouth Vision Statement is a constant living document that should be used in decision-making at every municipal meeting and should appear on meeting agendas as a reminder of where we strive to be in 2025.

**PROPOSED 2015 PORTSMOUTH MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:** Portsmouth will strive to be a city that is highly innovative and forward-thinking in how we achieve our collective goals to address issues connected to housing, development, transportation, and climate change. We aspire to be a city with a unique sense of place and will seek new and creative ways to manage

change to meet our needs.

1. Portsmouth will be a livable, walkable city that preserves its history,
2. Commits to active stewardship of our natural resources,
3. Encourages and fosters socio-economic diversity through affordable housing (“Affordable Housing” to mean everyone and anyone with a range of options and diverse housing stock.)
4. and connects neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation and improved infrastructure.
5. Portsmouth will consciously support its local arts and culture
6. and take steps to build community through
  - citywide events,
  - fostering opportunities for civic engagement
  - enhanced and beautified common living and recreating spaces
  - and neighborhood connectedness.

In these ways, Portsmouth will remain the most historic and most passionate city in New Hampshire.” AND WE MEAN IT.

**NON-BULLETED VERSION OF THE ABOVE:** The Portsmouth Vision Statement is a constant living document used in decision-making. It will be used and seen at every municipal meeting and will appear on meeting agendas.

Portsmouth will strive to be a city that is highly innovative and forward-thinking in how we achieve our collective goals to address issues connected to housing, development, transportation, and climate change. We aspire to be a city with a unique sense of place and will seek new and creative ways to manage change to meet our needs.

“Portsmouth will be a livable, walkable city that preserves its history, commits to active stewardship of our natural resources, encourages and fosters socio-economic diversity through affordable housing\* and connects neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation and improved infrastructure. Portsmouth will consciously support its local arts and culture, and take steps to build community through citywide events, fostering opportunities for civic engagement, enhanced and beautified common living and recreating spaces and neighborhood connectedness.

In these ways, Portsmouth will remain the most historic and most passionate city in New Hampshire.” AND WE MEAN IT.

\*(“Affordable Housing” to mean everyone and anyone with a range of options and diverse housing stock.)

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** (Discussion of what the priorities are for accomplishing the Vision for 2025)

1. Diverse housing stock
  - For young professionals, seniors, families, artists, etc

2. Continue to support community spaces and activities such as:
  - Skating rink
  - Farmers market
  - Intergenerational community center
  - Access to social services
3. Built environment
  - Diverse, authentic, and unique to this place
  - Preserve and complement existing historic resources
  - New construction that has human scale, height and mass (including open space)
  - Walkable and bike-able and park-able
  - Different areas with stores and venues that are connected and park-able
  - Not trying to replicate the past, but building what is authentic to Portsmouth now
4. Diverse economy
  - Not so dependent on tourism
  - More tech businesses at Pease
  - Vibrant downtown that enables small shops
  - Strong public transportation
  - Transportation hub
  - Working waterfront
5. Balance of tourists and residents
  - A more reasonable distribution of resources throughout city/neighborhoods/downtown
  - Catering to the needs of short-term visitors and the long-term residents
6. Arts would be thriving
7. Resource protection and sustainability
  - Set goals regarding carbon neutrality and ending reliance on fossil fuels

Other ideas we considered are:

- More preservation of the waterfront – re: access and visibility

# Final Report: Group F

**GROUP MEMBERS:** Jill Harkness, Jonathan Wycoff, Kevin Healy, Krysten Desmond, Leslie McCarthy, Linda Plumer, Marcella Spruce, Martin Ryan, Michael Kowalchuk

**FACILITATOR:** John Tabor

## I. INTRODUCTION

Group F was a diverse group of contributors that led and challenged the thinking around Portsmouth and how we see it developing over the next ten years. The group was made up of a range in ages, length of residency and backgrounds. It was a respectful and engaging meeting every Tuesday, and it was a pleasure to see the passions we all share toward our community and its future.

## II. OVERVIEW OF TEMPLATES

Template A: How has Portsmouth evolved over the years?

The top five (or more) examples of how Portsmouth has evolved over the years that are relevant to making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play over the next ten years are:

1. Optimization of city-wide infrastructure (e.g. better schools, sidewalks, curbs, lighting, sewer systems)
2. Evolution of the Pease Tradeport and the overall influence, attraction and sustainability for high-tech businesses as a result
3. Implementation of the new bridge from downtown to Kittery (tied for 3rd)
4. Increase in the number of people and general density of people as the result of tourism; visitors have increased (tied for 3rd)
6. Evolution and beautification of Strawberry Banke (e.g. ice rink) (tied for 4th)
7. Improved diversion of waste (trash, recycling, composting) (tied for 4th)
8. Development, growth, diversity and availability of arts and culture events and resources (e.g. 3S Art Space) (hand-voted after)
9. Increase in number of events (hand-voted after)

## OTHER IDEAS OR EXAMPLES WE CONSIDERED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Increase in parking demand making parking more difficult year-round (more cars in general) which impacts quality of life
- Increased availability and quality of social clubs, events and related organizations
- Increased emphasis on cycling and walking
- Increase in the number of visitors
- Introduction and development of satellite parks
- Increase in parks, community spaces, and recreational spaces which are intergenerational (e.g. Lafayette, ice skating rink, Halloween House, yoga studios).
- Cleanup of the bridge area / park / Old Ferry Landing walkway
- Accessibility of the transfer station
- Availability of co-working spaces / maker spaces (e.g. IOS)
- Continued increase of city’s reputation as a destination (e.g. NYT)
- More tourism / more precious
- Increase in the size of houses
- Increase in the number of hotels
- Fewer practical businesses downtown

Template B: What has been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

The top five (or more) examples of actions or events that have helped make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play:

1. Growth of PDAF, arts and culture (e.g. 3S Artspace)



- 2. Schools and Portsmouth Public Library
- 3. Low tax rates while other towns have increased (tied for 3rd)
- 4. Triumph over “nimbyism” (e.g. better Crossroads housing) (tied for 3rd)
- 5. Successful in keeping the city’s character
- 6. Farmer’s Market (tied for 5th)
- 7. Bridge to Kittery / community / social (tied for 5th)
- 8. City’s history is celebrated (tied for 5th)
- 9. Business and Commerce (tied for 5th)

Other ideas or examples we considered are:

- Safe community
- City services are good (ambulance, fire, police)
- Food and dining
- Fun / quality of life
- Strengthening of neighborhoods / community (e.g. Atlantic Heights, Chamber Dinner)

Template C: What has not been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

The top five (or more) examples of actions or events that have impaired or impeded making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play:

- 1. Issues around general public safety and health; this also encompasses issues surrounding drug abuse and policing
- 2. Lack of solid city wide transportation (tied for 2nd)
- 3. Lack of availability / decrease in affordable housing (tied for 2nd)
- 4. City zoning not changed in time
- 5. Lack of spaces for indoor recreation (e.g. loss of Connie Bean center)
- 6. Issues with parking (availability, ease of access, etc.) and managing parking in relation to buildings and new construction; issues with sidewalks and keeping the city scale

Other actions or events we considered are:

- Clean energy; environmental stewardship and education
- Growth of “nimbyism”
- City website is dated (“old school”) and city lacks digital presence
- Senior Center; services for the needy
- Diversity
- Jones Ave and other public spaces
- Loss of water views on Bow Street
- Need more green space / gathering places
- Naval prison
- Communication of public information / community outreach
- Federal Building
- Everything takes a long time (legislation)

Template D: What do we want Portsmouth to be and look like in 2025?

The top five (or more) ideas about what Portsmouth

should look like in 2025 to become the best place to live, work and play:

- 1. Permanent and year round public market / farmers market ideally downtown, potentially leveraging the Federal Building. If the Federal Building is not used for this, we would recommend that this be established elsewhere and also recommend that the Federal building be repurposed for some other type of public space.
- 2. Connector from bypass through the West End to Maplewood – a two-lane parkway with trees to open up the area by the train tracks and mill pond.
- 3. Fostering of lively West End; enhance the West End to allow for walkable streets, cafes, gathering places for young people (e.g. new skateboarders’ “S\*\*t Park”, Venice Beach vibe); leverage mixed use of buildings.
- 4. Ensure commitment toward environmental sustainability, work toward a carbon neutrality plan and leverage more solar power.
- 5. Foster diverse and mixed-use neighborhoods which welcome all income levels; neighborhoods should include parks, stores, community centers, etc. and have a “village vibe.”

OTHER IDEAS WE CONSIDERED ARE:

- Preserving ocean and river views (i.e. keeping low building heights near the water), building river walks and integrating them into community space, pushing for building public walks and public space before developers take over.
- More environmentally sensible and embraces the concept of “new urbanism”
- Greener and better tree management, healthy trees, urban farms, vertical gardens (e.g. repurpose of whale wall), roof gardens
- More permanent downtown population; “a place [where] those who grow up here, can stay here”
- Serve as a model community
- Better streets and sidewalks; keep Portsmouth green and even greener
- Preserve old Portsmouth (i.e. “don’t lose history”) and ensure Portsmouth “looks like New England”
- Develop High/Hanover garage for mixed use
- Develop brewery buildings
- More diverse population and economy; more tolerant; more courteous
- Ensure shipyard stays open
- Increase public spaces available for winter (e.g. warming huts)
- Foster thriving / growing economy across high-tech, light manufacturing, and education (i.e. universities)
- Focus on fostering community safety (i.e. public safety and health)
- Find creative and adaptive reuses for big-box stores (“we anticipate these will die over the next decade”).
- Implement humane and practical road infrastructure; ensure Portsmouth is “walkable” / “bikeable”; create connected transportation; ensure the town is connected (e.g.

bike shares)

- Preserve and enhance the neighborhoods; ensure smart growth planning
- Create low-impact recreational enterprise at Jones Ave. / Sagamore Island
- Ensure affordable housing

Template E: What, if any, changes should be made to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement?

PREVIOUS VISION STATEMENT

“Portsmouth should be a livable, walkable city that preserves its history, lives in balance with its natural resources, protects its waterfront and views, provides a good climate for entrepreneurial opportunity, acts on its belief in socio-economic diversity through affordable housing and connects neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation. Portsmouth should consciously support its local arts and culture and take steps to build community through citywide events, enhanced and beautified common living and recreating spaces and neighborhood connectedness. In these ways, Portsmouth will remain the most historic and most passionate city in New Hampshire.”

REVISED VISION STATEMENT

“Portsmouth should be a livable, active city that preserves its history and lives in balance with its natural resources while protecting its waterfront and views. The city should provide an attractive climate for entrepreneurial opportunity as well as act on its belief in socio-economic diversity through affordable housing. Portsmouth should continue to engage citizens and govern responsively, fostering community and democracy through traditional and innovative modes of communication. Portsmouth should build community by continuing to support our local artists, celebrate our culture and identity, and conserve our public spaces. In these ways, Portsmouth will remain the most historic and most thoughtful city in New Hampshire.

Template F: What are the “Priorities for Action” that will make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play in 2025?

The top five (or more) “Priorities for Action” that will make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play:

- 1. Repurpose Federal Building in a thoughtful, democratic way (e.g. through juried architectural competition)
- 2. Rezone to ensure higher density and mixed-use – make neighborhoods more livable and leverage traditional planning (e.g. drug stores, restaurants, comprehensive transportation planning that is not “car centric”, encourage small stores).
- 3. Ensure Portsmouth is green and sustainable – utilize alternative energy sources with new buildings, make composting more available, perform rooftop inventory for the

entire city to assess use cases for solar, create incentives for clean transportation / energy (e.g. Cambridge).

4. Create policies to promote ample housing at all price levels (e.g. requiring developers to create affordable housing; higher density permitted).

5. City should take the lead in efficiency and sustainability (e.g. more efficient city vehicles).

Other ideas we considered are:

- Raise the minimum wage
- Ensure excellence in education
- Create transportation hub – park and switch to other modes
- Ensure city is funded responsibly / future revenue growth

### III. Conclusion

Group F came to consensus around five priorities that reflected the overall focus of the group's discussions. We recognize the importance of balancing growth with insuring an accessible, affordable and sustainable community, and as a group, we believe that the existing opportunities to enhance both the city center and individual neighborhoods offer Portsmouth a chance to implement a positive, resident-centered vision that increases our appeal to visitors and businesses as well. We look forward to being a part of this on-going process.

## Final Report: Group G

**MEMBERS:** Tim Cullity, Teri Weidner Dahlen, Patience Horton, Susan Kanor, Rachel Kurshan, Terri Lambert, Michael Letendre, Tom Merriam, Sean Moundras, Ellen Saas, Matthew Sullivan, Patricia Townsend

**FACILITATOR:** Skye Maher

**SCRIBE:** Tim Cullity

**INTRODUCTION:** Members of this group shared an extensive knowledge of the historic values of Portsmouth as well as the progress that the city has seen over the past 60 years, both economically and culturally. We followed the study circle discussion guide and process in four two-hour sessions and shared experiences of members that have moved here within the past four years and those that were born and raised here and those that have enjoyed the spirit of town for longer than 60 years. Each member of the group brought their own diverse experiences to our discussion each night as we deliberated on our future state of the community.

### MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT (EDITED):

Portsmouth will be a bikeable, walkable, accessible city that preserves its history as a working port, lives in bal-

ance with its natural resources, protects its waterfront and views, provides a good climate for sustainable entrepreneurial, educational and employment opportunities, acts on its commitment to building affordable housing, providing needed services, encouraging payment of a living wage for all its residents, and connecting its neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation. Portsmouth supports local arts, recreation and culture and will take steps to build community through city-wide events and enhanced and beautified public spaces for recreation and gatherings. By keeping the society, the economy and the environment equally balanced, Portsmouth will be the best place to live, work and play for all its residents.

### KEY POINTS OF MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT EDITS:

- We removed some redundancy and vagueness throughout the previous vision statement in order to raise some specificity to details that we found to be common important themes throughout the group.
- We tried to remove “should be” and “acts on its belief” statements and replace with positive, affirmative verbs indicating that we will accomplish these goals in the ensuing ten years covered by this Master Plan.
- We encourage the protection of the working waterfront. Accessibility to the river is important, but not at the expense of the working waterfront that brings ships and cargo to our shore. The working waterfront is also an essential piece to the cultural and historical makeup of Portsmouth.
- Although we promote a heavy amount of development and economic and employment opportunities we thought that education needs to be included within the statement and that all growth in Portsmouth should be looked at holistically and sustainably with the long term plan and big picture in mind.
- We removed the sentence that pointed out the socioeconomic diversity or dichotomy that Portsmouth currently experiences. We thought that this statement acknowledged the disparity of wealth in town, but did not include any plan on how to fix that issue or minimize the gap.
- We included bikeability, walkability, accessibility and innovative modes of transportation as an underlying theme. We would like Portsmouth to continue with making improvements to the mobility of its citizens both from downtown to other parts of town and throughout all neighborhoods.
- We noticed that the affordable housing piece of the statement is important, but it didn't necessarily account for the middle class or the inaccessibility of houses for the middle class of Portsmouth or for those that make an average wage.
  - Due to the above, we added that Portsmouth encourage a living wage for all of its residents with the hope that this will allow for those residents that wish to be able to afford the cost of housing or purchasing a home in Portsmouth in the future.

- The previous closing was removed as we truly believe that Portsmouth shouldn't stop at striving to be the best city in New Hampshire. We thought that we continue to push forward as a leader and to keep making progress with regards to finding the perfect balance between the economy, the environment, and society.

### What has brought us to where we are today?

Portsmouth is currently in a renaissance phase of its development as a city. Although the arts and culture, restaurants and nightlife activity seem to be at an all-time high both socially and economically, the city has taken many steps over the years to get to where we are today that we must not lose track of as we move forward. We have pointed out key areas that have helped Portsmouth evolve into its current state:

- Downtown Resurgence through an influx of restaurants, visual arts, galleries, shops, theater and music
- Portsmouth has become a moderately accessible city with access to alternate transportation and walkable and bikeable paths
- The organization of community wide events which include the following:
  - Farmers Market
  - Prescott Park theater, arts, food and music
  - Strawberry Banke museum and ice rink
- The aesthetics and preservation of the colonial character of the city
- The intense development of neighborhoods near downtown that have now become commercial districts
- The revitalization and development of the Pease Tradeport as a space for commerce and jobs for the community
- The price of housing has increased greatly

Portsmouth has seen both positive and negative impacts from some of the list above. We discussed in further detail the development of the downtown area and the Pease Tradeport area which have aided to the economic boom in the city, but they may have also developed areas that could have been developed for more affordable or middle class income housing or even as more green spaces for the community to enjoy. One theme that continued throughout the conversations was that the cost of housing was too great for a normal middle income professional to afford and there was a lack of development in that sector.

A secondary theme that was brought up throughout the conversations was the fear of losing the green spaces that still do exist. Portsmouth has done a great job at keeping the green spaces that we do have intact, but we have lost some waterfront access and we will need to be even more aggressive with regards to our zoning of new development if we want to maintain and create new green spaces for the community.

### What has not been successful?

Below you will find the top five examples of actions or events that have impaired or impeded making Ports-

mouth the best place to live, work and play:

- 1. The changes in the socioeconomic structure in Portsmouth has affected the affordability of the city for some groups of people, in all areas, including housing.
- 2. Insufficient government oversight (a sense of inconsistent board decisions or disregard of regulations), inefficiency in decision making (20 years to site a library). Planning and coordination also was called to question.
- 3. Communication from city to residents seems inadequate, perhaps due to declining readership of newspapers and yet to be developed social media appropriate to the task. The current methods of searching a website don't seem to work for most.
- 4. Sustainability challenges in the natural environment, such as water and air quality control, traffic and emission regulation do not seem to be consistent or adequate for the next ten years. We can do better.
- 5. A tourist centric economy, as well as a social and recreational environment directed toward people who come into the city for those services, may have actually diminished the local resident's ability to access those same services.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** The below items are to be considered with the full belief of keeping the updated master plan vision statement in mind. If for any reason any of the action items are determined to not fit into the mold of the vision statement then it would be our expectation that the tasks included below be adjusted to maintain a balanced view of progress in the city.

- Economy and housing - A more balanced economy/development that provides a living wage for all and one that includes affordable housing, workspaces and services for our work force, including our public servants, artists, teachers and people who might need assisted living or community workspace accommodations.
  - Housing has been the consistent concern of our group. Housing for:
    - Assisted living opportunities
    - Moderate income retired people, i.e., public servants, teachers, artists, etc.
    - Affordable family opportunities
  - Transportation and Community Growth - Expanded neighborhood development with meaningful interconnectedness along corridors and gateways. Neighborhoods should include some services, places to gather, to eat, to socialize and places for special events.
  - Environment - Environmentally responsible biological practices, such as guarding against air and water pollution, insect control, expanded safe bike routes, expanded greenspaces and recreational spaces and more winter walkability.
  - Scenic Accessibility: Walkway along the waterfront and more view access in this charming town of ours. This is an end goal, but we would like this thought to be kept in mind as development continues to grow in the area and we hope not to lose the gorgeous views that have attracted so many of us to our beautiful New England town.

**OTHER IDEAS TO BE CONSIDERED ARE:**

- More frequent public transit
- Free web access throughout the city
- Create nearly all pedestrian downtown (or sections of downtown)
- Minimize chain businesses in the entire town and not just downtown

# Final Report: Group H

**PARTICIPANTS:** Brian Edmunds, Dan Umbro, Erin Moran, Jim Eiffe, Joan Lozier, Katerina Tsiguelnitskaia Steinberg, Keegan Carmichael, Nancy Clayburgh, Cynthia Jeffries, Martha Fuller Clark, John Robinson and Katelyn Kwoka

**FACILITATORS:** Jennifer Zorn and Sarah Holly

**INTRODUCTION**

**GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE GROUP AND PROCESS:** Group H developed an excellent rapport with each other and sense of team work from the start of Session 1. The input from long-time residents as well as that of former city councilor Nancy Clayburgh and State Senator Martha Fuller Clark brought an historical context to where Portsmouth came from to where it is now. We also had participants who are more recent residents, who had moved to Portsmouth from much larger cities.

The age distribution of the Group H members extended from millennials (20's) to Baby Boomers (70's). Although the age variations meant different life experience the similarities of the group were overall quite compatible. Some differences of vision existed but were few in number.

**2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:** What, if any, changes should be made to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement?

- The top five (or more) changes or additions to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement are:
- 1. In the 2nd bullet of the 2005 Vision Statement, use stronger and more active language regarding natural resources, e.g. cares for and protects versus live in balance.
  - 2. In the 8th bullet, regarding building community, emphasize the role of education, through neighborhood (elementary) schools as well as higher ed.
  - 3. In the same section, emphasize the importance of building community through providing support to vulnerable communities. Examples included economically distressed residents and those recovering from or grappling with addiction.
  - 4. In the 6th bullet, on connecting neighborhoods and better transportation, changes included adding language

to think of the city as a whole and that we should also think beyond connecting neighborhoods to include connecting Portsmouth with Boston and Manchester through better transportation.

5. For the 4th bullet on affordable housing, there were votes to keep this in the vision statement as well as including language about how to achieve this, e.g. through smarter development or zoning changes.

- Other changes or additions we considered are:
- When we talk about protecting the waterfront, this is more than just views. We also want to protect the working waterfront.
  - The vision statement should include building community through promotion of civic engagement.
  - Entrepreneurial opportunities are more than just promoting tourism.
  - Create the groundwork and programming for Portsmouth to be a drug free community.
  - The introduction needs to be more dynamic, to use a powerful, attention-getting vocabulary. Remove 'the most' from the last sentence of the Vision Statement.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** What are the "Priorities for Action" to accomplish the vision for 2025?

- 1. Preserve historic character, to include coherent and historic designs that keep with Portsmouth's unique character, keep water views, working waterfront and enforce building heights. Prevent the use of digital billboards within the city limits.
- 2. Support quality public schools and neighborhood schools.
- 3. Protect our environment, understand and develop policies to mitigate impact of climate change, promote alternative and renewable energy as well as composting.
- 4. Expand transportation options to alleviate congestion, offering such options as ride sharing, zip cars and bike sharing for Portsmouth and surrounding communities. Expand the routes and schedules of public transportation. Publicize alternative means of transportation to create more public support and greater usage.
- 5. Foster sustainability and establish a cohesive, vibrant and innovative development plan.
- 6. Create the zoning and the framework to develop and expand affordable housing.

**OTHER IDEAS WE CONSIDERED ARE:**

- Strengthening and expanding social services, with the goal of creating a drug free community. Also establish a volunteer portal or clearing house so that volunteers can connect with local groups providing social services.
- Improving walkability and connectivity, through better sidewalk connections throughout town and also increase accessibility for the disabled.



# Final Report: Group I

**GROUP MEMBERS:** Mark Cancelada, Linda Cunningham, Ruth DeMott, Jim Eiffe, Monica Greenleaf, Lance Hellman, Terri Nulph, Rebecca Perkins, Karina Quintans, Joanne Samuels, Mark Syracuse, Wes Tator.

**FACILITATOR:** Lori Gagnon.

**INTRODUCTION:** Portsmouth Listens is intended to foster vigorous discussion and meaningful consensus. Group I presents this report to the Portsmouth Planning Board having experienced both elements.

Our group was diverse and passionate, and Lori Gagnon was a great facilitator who allowed us to find where we could come together. It is fair to say that each person brought his or her angle and vision to the table, and in the end we believe these outcomes present meaningful proposals that represent a diverse cross-section of Portsmouth.

The culmination of our work together is a vision statement and a list of priorities for action. Our vision statement is intentionally short and is intended to be vivid, giving Portsmouth a brand that our population can get behind. We can pull our oars in the same direction to achieve the City we all want Portsmouth to be. We also purposefully used action verbs in our priorities for action, to make them more concrete and meaningful to the officials who implement them. They reflect a synthesis of ideas and perspectives in the group. Finally, recognizing that there were substantive conversations and commitments within the group that did not get into the action statement, we added them as “Other”.

Thank you for this opportunity, and we look forward to working with the City of Portsmouth to see these ideas continue to become reality.

## A. How has Portsmouth evolved over the years?

When asked to discuss how Portsmouth has evolved over the years, we identified five key changes/trends that have had positive impact in making Portsmouth a great place to live, work and play.

1. The first of these trends was the improvement in infrastructure and public services. With last winter still close to mind, we felt appreciative of all the plowing the city did to keep roads and schools open. Additionally we are supportive of the police and fire departments, the recycling program, new sidewalks in some areas, the updating of water and sewage pipes and roads, and the beautiful new library, middle school and expanded high school.

2. Secondly, we identified Portsmouth’s recreational facilities and opportunities to have evolved in great ways. There is so much to do in Portsmouth and not just in the downtown area. There are parks and playgrounds in every neighborhood, there is the Prescott Park Arts festival,

the Music Hall and the Loft, the skating rink, indoor and outdoor public pools, art galleries, multiple opportunities for shopping for a variety of income levels, different movie theatres, and restaurants, together reaching a wide variety of ages and tastes.

3. Portsmouth’s social vitality has evolved, which we see as tied in with support of the arts and events for all ages. Social vitality is also tied in with the restoration and development of neighborhoods, and the formation of community groups and activities such as the National Night Out. Although Portsmouth is a city, we like the feel of community here as opposed to the anonymity that can be felt in other cities.

4. Portsmouth has evolved in its efforts taken toward environmental sustainability comprising the third ingredient we identified as making Portsmouth a great place to live, work and play. There is some effort to incorporate sustainability into buildings, and there are 3 LEED certified buildings. Recycling services have expanded over the years and are more user friendly. Additionally, there has been storm water treatment that keeps many hazardous chemicals and materials from the environment. Although our group felt there was a way to go before Portsmouth can be considered truly sustainable, there is a feeling that the efforts made in this direction have been very positive toward making Portsmouth a great place to live work and play.

5. The economic vitality that has evolved in Portsmouth, even through some difficult financial times, is seen as an important underpinning for many of the things that we love about Portsmouth. We discussed how economic vitality can enhance all of the features described thus far. People remember times in the past when there were many empty storefronts and there was not the feeling of safety and social vitality that exists now. The city has many restaurants, shops and tourist treasures. The development of Pease has provided quality jobs, and is seen by many as a model for other communities. Along with a discussion of the benefits of economic vitality, we also discussed the potential downside of allowing the interests of businesses to outweigh the interests of community, recreation and environmental health.

6. Our last evolving trend that we identified as being a great part of Portsmouth is the emergence of transportation options. The busses are the beginning of a great trend, as they help people get around the city and reduce the auto emissions. There have been some bike paths added and some trails with closing down Market Square to cars and having a shuttle to ride into downtown. All of these efforts are steps in the right direction towards making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play.

## B: What has been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone.

1. Our group came to the agreement that the vibrant mixed use of downtown has been an important part of Portsmouth’s success story. There are apartments, houses and condos. There are businesses that cater to tourists as well as businesses that cater to residents. The city does not

roll up its sidewalks at 5:00, it has noisy parts and quiet parts, it has something for everyone.

2. Secondly, our group agreed that the strong support of arts and culture in Portsmouth has contributed greatly to the city’s success. Portsmouth has a tremendous variety of music festivals, film festivals, art galleries, and live theatre, supported by community members, the city and grants from businesses as well. There are many opportunities for lessons for our children to keep these arts going into the next generation. History in Portsmouth is kept alive through the Discovery Center, Strawberry Banke, the Athenaeum, and the Portsmouth Black History Trail including the African Burial Ground.

3. Support and preservation of neighborhoods as well as preservation of scenic space have helped to make Portsmouth a great place to live. There are beautiful tree lined streets and walk-able sidewalks. These, along with the renovation of old houses create neighborhood pride, which in turn keeps citizens involved and engaged.

4. Citizen involvement was the fourth factor that we identified as helping to make Portsmouth great. Citizen involvement in the form of neighborhood groups, attendance at city council meetings, participations in groups such as Portsmouth Listens, the Charettes and grass roots organizations keeps Portsmouth active and accountable.

5. City supported amenities are significant in how they have made Portsmouth successful. We defined this broad category to include essential city services such as police and fire departments, the recycling program, new sidewalks in some areas, the updating of water and sewage pipes and roads, and the beautiful new library, middle school and expanded high school. Additional city amenities that enhance Portsmouth include the trees that get planted around the city, bike paths, keeping access open to the waterfront, and holding the Holiday and Halloween parades. And, there are some important city amenities such as the food pantry, the provision of low-income housing, and social services that we also consider vital to keeping Portsmouth a great place to live.

6. The last idea we discussed that is important to keeping Portsmouth a great place to live, work and play is an attitude that is friendly to business development in order to bring and keep good jobs and services in the city. The demographic data we have shows that Portsmouth particularly needs jobs that will attract young employees. Being friendly to business development has to be balanced with addressing community and environmental health.

## C: What has not been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

We identified five examples of action or events that have impaired or impeded Portsmouth from being the best place to live work or play.

1. The first of these is the lack of preservation and access to scenic space. For those of us who have lived in Portsmouth for many years, we have seen a regrettable decline in wooded areas. For example, the Route 1 corridor was developed without any replacement of trees

that were cut down. We believe development can be done beautifully while maintaining a balance with nature. We also discussed the strong feelings many people have about some of the recent buildings in Portsmouth's North End that are bigger, more obtrusive and obstructive of views than what we want in Portsmouth. We feel the reduction of walkable access to scenic space is a significant loss to Portsmouth.

2. Over-development, non-conforming. The recent buildings downtown that now obstruct the view of the water and of the church steeple constitute a real loss to the people of Portsmouth and their sense of community. To people in our group this means the city feels more exclusive, less open to walking around, and oversized for our sense of home. Rather than conforming to the feel of Portsmouth, the North End now feels like part of some other city.

3. Zoning laws do not support diversification. Until recently, zoning has permitted development out of character with the area. Zoning has not forced adequate parking for the development uses. Also, there has been a lack of mandate or incentive for developers to include work-force housing.

4. Not keeping Portsmouth affordable. Our group is concerned about excluding young people from the city by virtue of the cost of buying a house. Young people can find houses in surrounding towns that are more affordable than Portsmouth. In addition to keeping housing affordable, we have to build up transportation options for people who don't have cars and make sure the many wonderful Portsmouth arts and entertainment events remain available to community members with lower income.

5. Not addressing the wastewater treatment plant. The city has been slow to address a serious problem of discharge that far exceeds current standards and regulations. There has been little consideration of creative ways to address this problem, such as a Bio Digester.

In addition to our top five priorities, there were two other actions or events we considered:

- Insufficient city-supported amenities/ lack of planning for changing demographics. This topic is discussed in the next section: D 4.
- Lack of progress on sustainability plan. Sustainability, and an emphasis on green growth is a high priority for our group. Discussion we had on this topic included requiring LEED certified buildings, or even becoming LEED certified city, as is Burlington Vt. We also discussed wanting Portsmouth to be a walkable city, and to have plans and preparations for climate change.

**D: What do we want Portsmouth to be and look like in 2025?**

Our group identified the following top five ideas about what Portsmouth should look like in 2025 to become the best place to live, work and play:

1. Planned Land Use –We would like to see planning that allows for further development without sacrifice of

historic character, the natural environment, walkability, views, and human scale of our community. We also need to plan for the aging demographic.

2. Comprehensive transportation –Our discussion included a full range of transportation methods including walking, bicycling, driving, busses, trains, ferries and planes. Many, but not all members of our group are in favor of having Market Square closed to car traffic. Transportation is a high priority for us because it connects neighborhoods, people to services and recreation, and Portsmouth to the region. We want to see transportation plans to be comprehensive to make the city become less car dependent, as well as to reduce carbon emissions and reduce congestion and parking problems.

3. Responsive and accountable city government – The recent development of Portwalk, and other oversized buildings in the city seemed to many members of this group to be out of sync with the 2005 Vision Statement. There is also a concern about an over-emphasis on hotels and conference centers. There is a concern that if Portsmouth becomes less popular with tourists, we will have a glut of empty buildings downtown. The loss of the iconic view of the church steeple and the water view near the Memorial Bridge is another big concern. These changes have led our group to feel that the city government is not acting in a way that is responsive to the vision statement, the mission statement and the will of the average community member.

4. Planning for and supporting a diverse population/ thriving economy/ and sustainability incorporated into public policy. Our group members want to see the city involved in planning for increasing diversity in our community. This includes diversity of age, ability, income level, race and ethnicity. We believe city planning for diversity is important to prevent the development of segregated neighborhoods. City-supported amenities such as health services, outreach and lifelong education also have to be planned for a diverse and integrated community. We want to see public policy that will support and protect an economically thriving, environmentally sustainable, and diverse community.

5. Citizen involvement. The group identified this as an essential component of keeping Portsmouth great. As community members we have a strong responsibility to let our ideas be known by communicating with the City Council and the Planning Department to let them know our priorities. We also need continued citizen involvement on boards of the various arts, social service, and recreation, health, and education agencies in order to keep all that we love about our city alive. Running a great city requires a dynamic interchange between citizens and elected officials, and a balance between professionals and volunteers.

**Other ideas we considered are:**

- Regional Planning – We want to see Portsmouth more connected with regional planning for environmental, social, economic, and transportation issues that

impact the city and its environs.

- World class lifelong education – We would like to see an increase in educational opportunities for the diverse population we envision.

**THE VISION STATEMENT:** As explained in our introduction, our group decided to develop a new vision statement rather than revise the previous one. Each word in this brief statement is laden with meaning. The vision statement is:

Portsmouth. A beautifully green, historic, and thriving community.

What are the “Priorities for Action” that will make Portsmouth the best place to live work and play in 2025?

Based on all of our discussions as outlined in the above narrative, we identified the following priorities:

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION: Top 4**

1. Planning for and supporting a diverse population.
  2. Implementing the master plan as the guiding document for city governance.
  3. Revising zoning laws to support the vision statement.
  4. Enhancing access to green, public recreational space.
- Other –
- Continue proactive support of arts and culture.
  - Develop lifelong learning opportunities.
  - Connect all the neighborhoods through comprehensive transportation.

# Final Report: Group J

**GROUP J MEMBERS:** Jeff Bartolini, Sherry Brandsema, Nancy Brown, Ilya Gribov, Stephanie Krenn, Paul Mannle, Rachel Roemer, Ania Rogers, Sharon Nichols (first week)

**FACILITATOR:** Adrienne Harrison

**INTRODUCTION:** This group was gender and age diverse, representing male and female residents of ages 30-65. Neighborhood representation was also diverse, including downtown, west Portsmouth, Atlantic Heights, Frank Jones/Woodbury, and Sagamore Avenue areas. Discussions were fueled by chocolate.

There were a few unifying topics that generated productive discussions around options and opportunities for the City. Neighborhoods were a strong theme, including discussions around reinforcing the identities of Portsmouth's neighborhoods, promoting connectedness between and among the neighborhoods, and remediating traffic and speed within neighborhoods. Accountability was another strong theme, including discussions about more public input in the implementation of the Master Plan and to truly incorporate the results of Portsmouth

Listens study circles into the priorities and actions of the City. Finally, the topic of affordability was identified as an important issue with discussions around the need for truly affordable housing options that are integrated into the character of all the neighborhoods. These topics are clearly addressed in the revised vision statement and the priorities for action.

**THE 2015 MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:**

The focus of the changes made to the Vision Statement focused on accountability, sustainability, affordability, building community, and increasing connectivity through innovative transportation options. This vision statement introduces the concept of accountability and recognizes the citizen interest in a more robust process for public engagement in the implementation of the Master Plan and vision. Another variation includes eliminating the general “economic development” terminology in favor of more specific guidance on the types of economic development that are suited in Portsmouth, with special emphasis on “local”, sustainable and maritime-based development. The idea of community is referenced throughout the vision, reinforcing the need for Portsmouth to maintain its small town character and use events and activities to build social capital and engagement.

**THE RESULTING VISION STATEMENT WAS**

**GENERATED:** Portsmouth will be a livable, pedestrian-focused, sustainable community that preserves its history, neighborhood character, natural resources and maritime heritage, supports a local economy, commits to socio-economic diversity through affordable housing, and connects neighborhoods through multiple, innovative, and safe modes of transportation. Portsmouth will support its local arts and culture and build community through citywide and neighborhood events and activities, enhance and create common living, recreational and green spaces. Portsmouth will be accountable to its community in achieving this vision.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:**

- 1. Accountability
- 2. Neighborhood character, infrastructure and vitality
- 3. Pedestrian-focused
- 4. Diverse transportation options
- 5. Socio-economic diversity through “affordable housing”
- 6. Local economy
- 7. Local arts and culture
- 8. Green space
- 9. Natural resources
- 10. Climate preparedness

Specific actions were also identified related to several priorities. Related to “diverse transportation options”, the group discussed the potential for satellite parking areas that include public restrooms, kiosks with welcome information about the City and local neighborhoods, and access to trolleys and public bikes, as well as pedestrian-

only sections of downtown, and safer bike and walk options throughout the city. Related to “neighborhood character”, the group discussed the need for an organized neighborhood tour that builds community and pride in unique character of each neighborhood as well as holding citywide events throughout the city (not just downtown) and to encourage innovative housing options and include expanded green space.

# III. GROUP FINDINGS

In the dialogue process, each study circle group explored a series of questions designed to focus the discussion on issues pertinent to the Master Plan. The six questions were:

**Template 1** – How has Portsmouth evolved over the years?

**Template 2** – What has been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

**Template 3** – What has not been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

**Template 4** – What do we want Portsmouth to be like and look like in 2025?

**Template 5** – What, if any, changes should be made to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement?

**Template 6** – What are the “Priorities for Action” that will make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone in 2025?

Each of the following Templates sets out each group’s answers to each of the six questions. It is interesting to see the commonality of findings and recommendations across the eleven groups.



# TEMPLATE 1:

## How has Portsmouth evolved over the years?

### DAY GROUP

- 1. Development of Pease – changes in demographics, economic development
- 2. Historic preservation – main street development, saving/re-using old buildings
- 3. Transportation and access to and from Portsmouth (Rt 101, C&J, location on 95, commercial airport, new infrastructure)
- 4. Natural beauty of area and open space, water-front access and preservation
- 5. Adequate development of high-end housing and low income housing, need for middle and/or affordable housing

### GROUP A

- 1. Community has been dispersed to other areas outside of downtown. Disconnected/decentralized
  - Lack of community feeling
- 2. Diversity in housing will support wellbeing of community
- 3. Type or economy we have is changing
  - Seaport value is not commerce related.
- 4. A need for open space
- 5. Downtown to tourist area
  - Demographics becoming older, wealthier, professional
  - Emergence of Non-Profit organizations/Art increased

Other: Transportation needs change

### GROUP B

- 1. Fostering Civic Involvement
- 2. Big Investment in Infrastructure examples wastewater, parking garage, bridges, roads
- 3. Disconnectedness due to car use & there is a risk of not protecting the city life and the connectedness of diverse city groups
- 4. Good job of maintaining public spaces
- 5. More active city center

Other: Increased recreational/ cultural events for all ages; Cost of entry is higher - cost of housing, restaurants; partnering of health care organizations to serve the aging pop. Civic pride: caring re: how Portsmouth looks; Vocal city; Downtown area is expanding i.e. Islington.

### GROUP C

- 1. Infrastructure & Transportation
- 2. Arts & Culture & History
- 3. Housing
- 3. Balancing Socioeconomic Advantage and Disadvantage
- 3. Purposeful Economic Development & Mixed usage of space

“Small City With Big City Problems”

Other: Civic actions (actions that city and citizens decide collectively); Portsmouth is FUN! So much to do;  
Natural Resources – use and preservation of clean water, sustainable infrastructure (sewage, etc.), thinking about the impact on our environment.

### GROUP D

- 1. Portsmouth economy has become more diverse and less dependent on any one industry
- 2. More and larger Arts & culture organizations, attracting both a broader set of talent as well as audiences from outside the local area
- 3. Lot of development in downtown
- 4. Successful redevelopment and re-invention of Pease as an international commercial space
- 5. Changing demographics are skewing toward older, wealthier, with fewer families.

Other: Green space has become less “wild,” more manicured; Portsmouth has become less diverse culturally; concern over safety (bike/pedestrian on busy streets; public safety in light of heroin/drug epidemic)

### GROUP E

- 1. Popularity (parking, irritation, arts x2) – group talked about Portsmouth’s increased popularity had both positive and negative outcomes.
- 2. Economic Changes/Built Environment (tie) New building x2 Hyperfocus on downtown
- 3. History & Culture
- 4. Youth & Family (middle, Connie Bean) Many elementary schools closed, new middle and high school, community center closed, skating rink opened.
- 5. Environmental (infrastructure) Again, both positive and negative

Other: All above

### GROUP F

- 1. Optimization of city-wide infrastructure (e.g. better schools, sidewalks, curbs, lighting, sewer systems)
- 2. Evolution of the Pease trade port and the overall influence, attraction and sustainability for high-tech businesses as a result
- 3. Implementation of the new bridge from downtown to Kittery (tied for 3rd)
- 4. Increase in the number of people and general density of people as the result of tourism; visitors have increased (tied for 3rd)
- 6. Evolution and beautification of Strawberry Banke (e.g. ice rink) (tied for 4th)

- 7. Improved diversion of waste (trash, recycling, composting) (tied for 4th)
- 8. Development, growth, diversity and availability of arts and culture events and resources (e.g. 3S Art Space) (hand-voted )
- 9. Increase in number of events (hand-voted after)

Other ideas: Increase in parking demand making parking more difficult year-round (more cars in general) which impacts quality of life; Increased availability and quality of social clubs, events, related organizations; Increased emphasis on cycling and walking; Increase in number of visitors; Introduction and development of satellite parks; Increase in parks, community spaces, and recreational spaces which are intergenerational (e.g. Lafayette, ice skating rink, Halloween House, yoga studios); Cleanup of bridge area / park / Old Ferry Landing walkway; Accessibility of transfer station; Availability of co-working/maker spaces (e.g. IOS); Continued increase on cities reputation as destination (e.g. NYT); More tourism / more precious; Increase in size of houses; Increase in number of hotels; Fewer practical businesses downtown.

### GROUP G

- 1. Coffee shops and restaurants
- 2. A walkable city with available alternate transportation
- 3. Community Events
- 4. Mixed Housing
- 5. Recreation spaces and parks

Other: Reuse of properties; Entertainment and the arts; Aesthetics of landscape and streetscape

### GROUP H

- 1. Gentrification – BAD (rise in wealthy buying property, rise in rents, change of merchants, locally-owned stores are leaving, arrival of franchises, property tax increase)
- 2. Arts – GOOD (all combined are a tremendous asset)
- 3. New City Buildings – GOOD (excellent facilities)
- 4. New Development – BAD (faux architecture and poor street layout, loss of views)
- 5. Tourism – BAD (town is too focused on tourism industry)

Other: Loss of fishing trade; Air Force leaving Pease; Sea Level Rise – not even being done; Transportation options are stagnant

### GROUP I

- 1. Infrastructure and Public Services

- 2. Recreation
- 3. Social Vitality tied with Restoration and Development
- 4. Sustainability
- 5. Economic Vitality

Other: Transportation.

### GROUP J

- 1. Arts community: changes in venues, new venues, Portsmouth is a place for arts
- 2. Economic development: Investment in downtown
- 3. Corridor communities: too much emphasis on downtown, while corridor communities and corridor infrastructure were neglected/not improved
- 4. Parks and green space: investment in park and green space amenities (Prescott Park and skating rink); some parks have been lost
- 5. Traffic: more traffic, more cars

Other: Community events: events attract tourists, less local

# TEMPLATE 2:

## What has been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

### DAY GROUP

- 1. Mixed Use Downtown
- 2. Tourism
- 3. Arts festivals, cultural events
- 4. Waterfront/Open Space
- 5. Farmers Market

- Other:
- Re-development of Pease
  - Sustainability/eco-municipality

### GROUP A

- 1. Parks (9 Votes)
- 2. Preservation of History (8 V)
- 3. Neighborhoods (8 Votes)
- 4. Balance of Zoning (With Taxes Down) (6votes)
- 5. Arts (5 Votes)

- Other ideas or examples we considered are:
- Diversity of Businesses (4 V)
  - Schools (Budget) (3 Votes)
  - Portsmouth Listens (3 V)
  - Farmers Market (2 Votes)
  - Community Volunteers (1)
  - Downtown Development (1)

### GROUP B

- 1. Thoughtful Planning (10 dots)
- 2. Increased Events ex. Skating rink in town and other public celebrations that are affordable and accessible (8 )
- 3. Pervasiveness of the Arts (8 dots)
- 4. Economic Diversity (6 dots)
- 5. Walkableness of Downtown (5)
- 6. Infrastructure Changes e.g. new lighting, feels safer and it is pretty – brings joy to the town (5 dots)

- Other ideas or examples are:
- Philanthropy (4 dots)
  - Collaboration between city art, history, & cultural agencies and sites (4 dots)
  - Education and knowledge sharing activities (4 dots)
  - Regional leader (2 dots)
  - Convenience (it is all there in one place) (2 dots)
  - Prosperity (1 dot)
  - Fostering civic participation (1)

### GROUP C

- 1. Prescott Park Arts Festival – free entertainment – and other arts orgs like 3S.
- 2. Community Celebrations – Childrens’ Festival, Halloween Parade, Christmas Parade, Market

- Square Day
- 3. Restaurants and hospitality culture
- 4. Preserving the old/historic homes
- 5. Civic recreation – pools, dog parks, walking and rec groups  
(numbering is intentional –tie for first place)

- Other ideas or examples we considered are:
- Civic actions like the new library and new middle school
  - Portsmouth survived the Pease closure
  - Re-development of the Music Hall
  - Re-development of the Wentworth By the Sea
  - Amount of theatres
  - Mixed housing like at Strawberry Banke or housing in old schools
  - Economic recession not felt here as deeply as in other places
  - Still seeing new businesses
  - Entrepreneurial spirit
  - Added hotel rooms (done now)
  - Mix of unique, small businesses and known brand

### GROUP D

- 1. Growth of the creative economy
- 2. Diverse economy has led to stability
- 3. Expansion of downtown has
- 4. Portsmouth has done a good job of historic preservation and re-use of buildings
- 5. Citizen input to zoning has been successful

- Other ideas or examples: Emphasis on walkability and bikability

### GROUP E

- 1. Community Events and Community Involvement. Strawberry Banke/Halloween Parade/ Farmer’s Market, civic participation
- 2. Arts & Culture
- 3. History
- 4. Walkability
- 5. Tradeport Development/Natural Beauty/Waterfront

- Other ideas or examples we considered are:
- Sports/Social Services/Architecture/Restaurant scene
  - Local ind media/Local business

### GROUP F

- 1. Growth of PDAF, arts and culture (e.g. 3S Arts space)
- 2. Schools and Portsmouth Public Library
- 3. Low tax rates while other towns have increased

- (tied for 3rd)
- 4. Triumph over “nimbyism” (e.g. better Cross-roads housing) (tied for 3rd)
- 5. Successful in keeping the city’s character
- 6. Farmer’s Market (tied for 5th)
- 7. Bridge to Kittery / community / social (tied for 5th)
- 8. City’s history is celebrated (tied for 5th)
- 9. Business and Commerce (tied for 5th)

- Other ideas or examples we considered are:
- Safe community
  - City services are good (ambulance, fire, police)
  - Food and dining
  - Fun / quality of life
  - Strengthening of neighborhoods / community (e.g. Atlantic Heights, Chamber Dinner)

### GROUP G

- 1. HEALTHY PUBLIC SECTOR: Gov. planning for services (water/sewer security, emergency services, disaster preparedness, recreation areas, parks. (Upn review, we wondered if we really do have disaster preparedness. How would we know?)
- 2. SCHOOLS: educational opportunities, good schools convenient to housing, transportation to higher education facilities.
- 3. TRANSPORTATION: Transit via bus or trolley to local businesses, housing, recreation making a more sustainable system supporting our economy
- 4. ECONOMIC SERVICES: Local business, including banks, service industries, housing and historic preservation all have added to improving the way we live and work and play in Portsmouth.
- 5. FOOD: Local Farmers’ Market increases our regional food security, the restaurant industry in Portsmouth has become an economic engine for the city and general interest in food has increased the local business that are related to growing and consuming.

### GROUP H

- 1. Improved Transportation Infrastructure
- 2. Festivals and similar downtown events (including races)
- 3. The Arts (all facilities combined)
- 4. The Library
- 5. Preservation of History / Historic Homes
- 6. Parks and Recreation Facilities
- 7. Pease Economic Development

- Other ideas or examples:
- Farmers Market
  - City Wide Internet – provided by the City
  - The Decks portion of the restaurant category

### GROUP I

- 1. Vibrant mixed use of downtown.
- 2. Arts and Culture
- 3. Support and preservation of neighborhoods/ scenic space
- 4. Citizen involvement
- 5. City supported amenities

- Other ideas or examples: Business development friendly

### GROUP J

- 1. Economic development: Revitalization of downtown
- 2. Arts and culture: Creation of diversity of events/ community
- 3. Economic development: Redevelopment of Pease (economic development)
- 4. Community: Structures for civil engagement – e.g. Portsmouth Listens
- 5. Arts and culture: Preservation of historical landmarks

- Other ideas or examples:
- CDBG funding to enhance neighborhoods (economic development)
  - Grassroots efforts for environmental enhancement/awareness
  - Fixing local bridges
  - Improved city management
  - Developing Portsmouth as a hub for local arts

# TEMPLATE 3:

## What has not been successful in making Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?

### DAY GROUP

- 1. Overemphasis on economic development based on increasing tourism
- 2. Loss of Connie Bean and Senior Center
- 3. Loss of continuing adult education
- 4. Contradiction between development and “eco-municipality”
- 5. Afordable housing (work force, working class)

### GROUP A

- 1. Ruined Waterfront Views (12 Votes)
- 2. Elimination of required Parking Spaces by Restaurant (10 Votes)
- 3. Making all of Portsmouth as Special as Down-town (10 Votes)
- 4. Loss of Connie Bean Center and restrictions of use in the building (6 Votes)
- 5. Decrease in Rental housing (4 Votes)

Other actions or events we considered are:

- Loss of Senior Center (3 Votes)
- Prioritizing development over resident’s needs (3 Votes)
- Destruction of North End neighborhood / Pease housing (driving shortage of Portsmouth housing) (2 Votes)
- Cultural Commissions Funding structure makes ineffective

### GROUP B

- 1. Lack of civic participation. (9 dots)
  - There are a lot of volunteer vacancies. What are the reasons/barriers for example time, hassles to apply/sign up?
- 2. Unsustainable Transportation (9)
- 3. Poor Town Communication (8)
  - Is it due to lack of resources, lack of modern modes of communication? How long does it take to have residents on the town newsletter distribu-tion? Why don’t we publicize how to use city waterways and trails?
- 4. Supporting areas other than downtown (7 dots)
- 5. Not Addressing Parking. (5 dots)
- 6. Not addressing workforce housing. (5 dots)
- 7. Lack of thoughtful planning outside of down-town (5 dots)

Other actions or events:

- Not managing development (4)
- Lack of regional thinking (3 dots)
- Same people keep showing up to make the case or their opinions known to make the changes in the city (3 dots)
- Diminishing economic diversity (3 dots)

### GROUP C

- 1. Planning and Zoning:
  - City: zoning ordinances, downtown develop-ment, Unclear plan for open space Prescott Park, parking issues
  - Non-City: Public/Private partnerships – Festi-val days and events
  - State: Port and Pease development, port/ waterfront planning (working waterfront vs. eye-sore vs. public access and views), state highways impede local access/amenities
- 2. Affordability – Lack of diversity of housing, workforce housing, Cost of city administration, property taxes, retaining/attracting younger citizens & artists that may have been driven out, cable and internet costs
- 2. Infrastructure – Transportation and Parking (numbering is intentional – tie for second place)
- 4. Civic Discourse – lack of City transparency leads to negative responses and how the media does or does not support that
- 5. Tourism – impact on economic diversity, lack of unique small businesses, fewer Bed and Break-fasts, impact of tourism on kitschy charm
- 6. Aging Population – lack of services, housing options, transportation

Other actions or events we considered are:

- All listed beneath the top six categories

### GROUP D

- 1. Development has led to loss of human scale and views of iconic landmarks & waterfront
- 2. Loss of diversity in the population both ethni-cally and economy
- 3. Housing costs (including rentals, workforce housing) have driven out younger, less affluent population
- 4. Sacrifice of local culture in favor of more “vi-able” national culture (arts)

### GROUP E

- 1. Development in general
  - Blocked views/height/lack of open space
  - New architecture style
  - Interconnectedness
- 2. Parking/Lack of affordable housing (tie)
  - Workforce
  - Post-graduation & post working
  - Property taxes
- 3. NIMBY (Not In My Backyard)
  - Vocal minority
  - Missing the success stories (Olde Port Traders)
- 4. Increased cost of living/Downtown concentra-tion of everything
- 5. No community center anymore (Closing of

Connie Bean)  
Other actions or events: Lack of volunteers, Traffic

### GROUP F

- 1. Issues around general public safety and health; this also encompasses issues surrounding drug abuse and policing
- 2. Lack of solid city wide transportation (tied for 2nd)
- 3. Lack of availability / decrease in affordable housing (tied for 2nd)
- 4. City zoning not changed in time
- 5. Lack of spaces for indoor recreation (e.g. loss of Connie Bean center)
- 6. Issues with parking (availability, ease of access, etc.) and managing parking in relation to build-ings and new construction; issues with sidewalks and keeping the city scale

Other actions or events we considered are:

- Clean energy; environmental stewardship and education
- Growth of “nimbyism”
- City website is dated (“old school”) and city lacks digital presence
- Senior Center; services for the needy
- Diversity
- Jones Ave and other public spaces
- Loss of water views on Bow Street
- Need more green space / gathering places
- Naval prison
- Communication of public information / com-munity outreach
- Federal Building
- Everything takes a long time (legislation)

### GROUP G

- 1. The changes in the socioeconomic structure in Portsmouth has affected the affordability of the city for some groups of people, in all areas, includ-ing housing.
- 2. Insufficient government oversight (a sense of inconsistent board decisions or disregard of regulations), inefficiency in decision making (20 years to site a library). Planning and coordination also called to question
- 3. Comunication from city to residents seems in-adequate, perhaps due to declining readership of newspapers and yet to be developed social media appropriate to the task. The current methods of searching a website don’t seem to work for most.
- 4. Sustainability challenges in the natural envi-ronment, such as water and air quality control, traffic and emission regulation do not seem to be consistent or adequate for the next ten years. We can do better
- 5. A tourist centric economy, as well as a social and recreational environment directed toward

people who come into the city for those services, may have actually diminished out ability to access those same services.  
Other actions or events we considered are:  
6. Lack of access to the natural environment

### GROUP H

- 1. Affordable Housing (overwhelming issue that must be addressd)
- 2. Loss of Waterfront Views
- 3. Loss of historic look and feel from the new construction
- 4. Connecting the downtown to other parts of Portsmouth
- 5. Providing various modes of transportation

Other:  
No initiative on climate change  
Too many hotels  
Parking problems  
Accessibility by disabled

### GROUP I

- 1. Lack of preservation and access to scenic space.
- 2. Over-development, non-conforming.
- 3. Zoning laws do not support diversification
- 4. Not keeping Portsmouth affordable.
- 5. Not addressing the waste water treatment plant.

Other actions or events we considered are:

- Insufficient city-supported amenities/ lack of planning for changing demographics
- Lack of progress on sustainability plan.

### GROUP J

- 1. Economic development: Focus on revitalizing downtown at the expense of outlying neighbor-hoods
- 2. Traffic: Increased traffic without providing enough parking
- 3. Community: Lack of commitment/accountability to Master Plan
- 4. Economic development: Lack of housing oppor-tunities for diverse socio-economic groups
- 5. Community: Lack of community involvement

Other actions or events are:

- Lack of traffic routing/planning prior to construction
- Brick sidewalks (expensive/not historically accurate)
- To many zoning changes in favor of develop-ment
- Neglecting infrastructure
- Unbalanced private development



# TEMPLATE 4:

## What do we want Portsmouth to be and look like in 2025?

### DAY GROUP

1. Economic diversity: diversity of housing options, including affordable workforce housing that is accessible to jobs and services
2. Diverse community (ethnicity, race, age)
3. Re-focus and true commitment on sustainability – be a leader, role-model community
4. Master Plan needs to address needs of the whole of the city (being inclusive/comprehensive)
5. Connectedness – walkability, expanded bus routes and bike paths, and revitalization of inter-connected neighborhoods
6. Lifelong learning for everyone (adult education, whole life, senior center and education)

### GROUP A

1. More investment in neighborhoods, not just downtown (6)
2. More public access to water, eg: riverwalk (6)
3. Need for open space – green, which connects people (4)
4. Better balance between Residential and Business Interests (4)
5. Increased diversity in age and economic income levels, and services to all groups (3)
6. Balance between history and innovation ed: historic commission is too great (3)
7. Recentralize community assets, eg: Connie Bean center (3)
8. Enhance pedestrian, Bike and public transportation (3)

Other ideas we considered are:

- More opportunity for small business and artists (2)
- Excellent schools(2)
- Commitment to public art – all kinds, schools, libraries, etc. (1)
- Improved voter knowledge of issues (1)

### GROUP B

1. Environmentally mindful (7 dots): Retain open spaces (Prescott Park, Sagmore Creek, Field near PHS); Consider future environmental impact of building and eco-systems; Regional leader in greenhouse gas emission reduction. Carbon neutral

2. Economic diversity and opportunity (7 dots): Regional leader in economic opportunity and connecting the diversity and know each other; Attract large and small/new businesses; Good place for small businesses to start; Support a living wage; Encourage worker owned and managed businesses (tax incentives); Cluster zoning (intentional communities); Make low income housing architecturally attractive; Reduce or look at barriers to economic opportunity; Give all city workers a living wage; Incentivize businesses to bring a living wage to their private workforce.

3. Education (6 dots): Continued support for education system as child population decreases; Support the earliest years of child education and families.

4. Walkable/Bikeable (6 dots): Implement the full bike/ped master plan;. Finish in 10 years; Make a financial commitment for entire plan; Bike lanes and walkable; All neighborhoods able to walk and bike downtown.

5. Balancing the old and new (5 dots): Go to owners of the open building projects (unused older buildings) - why still unfinished; Does city need to loosen its requirements for historical buildings?; Too many restrictions is barrier to general upkeep; How much history do we preserve at the expense of development; Establish long term infrastructure plan.

6. Civic and community participation (5 dots): Civically active and broad participation in the community; Community that is progressive (forward thinking) and attracts progressive residents.
7. Fiscal Commitment (4 dots): Budget to support the Master Plan; Prioritize what to do first; Close the gap on vision and implementation.

8. Aggressive/Progressive (4 dots): Zoning and density for workforce housing to support getting it done; Mix of old and new is okay to complement the old; West End and Northern Tier projects completed in 10 years; Frank Jones project should be completed; Change historic zoning

9. Arts (4 dots): Remain a community focused on the arts

10. Health (1 dot): Foster a healthy community; Understand the drug problem; Empathy and compassion; Education.

11. Easily accessible information (1 dot): Centralize all the information about Portsmouth. Web based information to be 2-3 clicks to get to the information; Leverage technology to connect the public; Technology classes via the library; Electronic information kiosks in Portsmouth; Good signage for tourists to know the city; Bring

technology talent existing Portsmouth to do this work; Way finding project – include signage for identifying neighborhoods.

### GROUP C

1. Transportation – functioning like a city; get around without a car; biking, light rail, buses; need the political will behind it to make it happen; regional transportation.

2. Retain authenticity – blue collar/white, working port, arts and culture, small business, blend of tourism and hometown.

3. Maintain welcoming character and unique character/ inclusivity of neighborhoods, predominantly safe, common spaces and common goals.

4. Make other areas as special as downtown – multiple destinations- support unique neighborhoods.

5. Open spaces – more in town/neighborhoods.

6. Consider ward based City Councilors – direct connection to Neighborhood Associations

7. Natural Environment – planning sea level rise, water treatment facility, noise control (trucks, motorcycles, music).

8. Maintain Protection of open spaces - waterfront – ocean planning to maintain fishermen lobstermen (commercial pier is owned by the state).

9. Blend of old and new architecture – preservation of old – not mimicking new

### GROUP D

1. Economic development has its roots in the local landscape (locally driven businesses even if business done outside the local area). Businesses owned & developed by people invested in the local area

2. Affordable housing including artist work/live space, allowance for elderly, middle and low income

3. The remaining waterfront stays with no new construction

4. More public gathering spaces, not necessarily concentrated downtown, with public art as part of the design

Other ideas we considered are: Lack of consensus on priorities for the waterfront — whether cruise ships or ‘grittier’ working waterfront; just no new construction, esp. condos

### GROUP E

1. Diverse housing stock for young professionals, seniors, families, artists, etc

2. Continue to support community spaces and activities – such as skating rink, farmers market
  - Intergenerational community center
  - Access to social services

3. Built environment – diverse, authentic, and unique to this place
  - New construction that has human scale, height and mass (including open space)
  - Walkable and bikable and parkable
  - Different areas with stores and venues that are connected and parkable
  - Not trying to replicate the past, but building what is authentic to Portsmouth now\

4. Diverse economy not so dependent on tourists
  - More tech businesses at Pease
  - Vibrant downtown that enables small shops
  - Strong public transportation
  - Transportation hub
  - Working waterfront

5. Balance of tourists and residents
  - A more reasonable distribution of resources throughout city/neighborhoods/downtown
  - Catering to the needs of short term visitors and the long term residents

6. Arts would be thriving

Other ideas we considered are: more preserving of the waterfront – re: access and visibility

### GROUP F

1. Permanent and year round public market / farmers market ideally downtown, potentially leveraging the Federal Building. If the Federal Building is not used for this, we would recommend that this be established elsewhere and also recommend that the Federal building be repurposed for some other type of public space.

2. Connector from bypass through the West End to Maplewood – a two-lane parkway with trees to open up the area by the train tracks and millpond.

3. Fostering of lively West End; enhance the West End to allow for walkable streets, cafes, gathering places for young people (e.g. Venice Beach vibe); leverage mixed use of buildings.

4. Ensure commitment to environmental sustainability, work toward a carbon neutrality plan, leverage more solar power.

5. Foster diverse and mixed-use neighborhoods which welcome all income levels; neighborhoods should include parks, stores, community centers, etc. and have a “village vibe”.

- Other ideas we considered are:
- Preserving ocean and river views (i.e. keeping low building heights near the water), building river walks and integrating them into community space, pushing for building public walks and public space before developers take over.
  - More environmentally sensible and embrace “new urbanism”
  - Greener and better tree management; healthy trees; urban farms, vertical gardens (e.g. repurpose of whale wall), roof gardens
  - More permanent downtown population; “a place those who grow up here, can stay here”
  - Serve as a model community
  - Better streets, sidewalks; keep Portsmouth green and even greener
  - Preserve old Portsmouth (i.e. “don’t lose history”) and ensure Portsmouth “looks like New England”
  - Develop High/Hanover garage for mixed use
  - Develop brewery buildings
  - More diverse population, economy; more tolerant; more courteous
  - Ensure shipyard stays open
  - Increase public spaces available for winter (e.g. warming huts)
  - Foster thriving / growing economy across high-tech, light manufacturing, and education (i.e. universities)
  - Focus on fostering community safety (i.e. public safety and health)
  - Find creative and adaptive reuses for big-box stores (“we anticipate these will die over the next decade”).
  - Implement humane and practical road infrastructure, ensure Portsmouth is “walkable” / “bikeable”; create connected transportation; ensure the town is connected (e.g. bike shares)
  - Preserve and enhance the neighborhoods; ensure smart growth planning
  - Create low-impact rec enterprise at Jones Ave. / Sagamore Island
  - Ensure affordable housing

GROUP I

1. Planned Land Use
2. Comprehensive transportation
3. Responsive and accountable city government
4. Planning for and supporting a diverse population/ thriving economy/ and sustainability incorporated into public policy.
5. Citizen involvement.

- Other ideas we considered are:
- Regional Planning
  - World class Lifelong education

GROUP G

1. A more balanced economy/development that provides a living wage for all and one that includes affordable housing and services for our work force, including our public servants, teacher and people who might need assisted living accommodation.
2. Expanded neighborhood development with meaningful interconnectedness along corridors and gateways. Neighborhoods should include some services, places to gather, to eat, to socialize and places for special events.
3. Environmentally responsible biological practices, such as guarding against air and water pollution, insect control, expanded safe bike routes, expanded greenspaces and more winter walkability.
- 4.Walkway along the waterfront and more view access in this charming town of ours.

- Other ideas we considered are:
- More frequent public transit
  - Free web access all over town
  - Pedestrian downtown
  - More diversity in race, age, ethnicity and socio-economic status
  - No chain businesses in the downtown
  - Increase air service

GROUP H

1. Rail station/rail service to Boston
2. Balance tourism needs with resident needs
3. Improved recreation facilities
4. Maintain and renovate the neighborhood schools
5. Keep height level of buildings less than 60 feet (buildings are too tall)
6. Maintain and create more waterfront access

- Other input:
- Professional training required for city boards
  - Create more interesting green space
  - Create greater density for housing units (smaller, affordable)
  - Keep downtown more local in nature
  - Become a drug free community
  - Fewer homeless
  - Improved southern gateway to city and downtown
  - More sidewalks and traffic calming measures
  - Green infrastruc / Greenways / Green belts
  - Create more housing
  - Drug prevention education
  - Slower paced land development
  - Beautification of Route 1 Bypass
  - Keep light in and shadows limited (from new buildings)
  - Zip cars
  - Clean waters such as Mill Pond

- A traffic free market square
- Pease – playing fields for city schools
- Frank Jones property developed
- Enforce noise ordinance – especially motor-cycles
- Bicycle paths to connect neighborhoods
- Continue mixed use zoning throughout city
- Create neighborhood identities
- Less crime, less drugs
- Improved accessibility
- Expansion of bicycle lanes
- Bicycle sharing
- A park at the Bridge Street parking lot
- Senior center
- Revisit city owned land
- Create neighborhood watches / clean up days
- More dog parks

GROUP J

- What we want Portsmouth to BE like in 2025?
1. Historic, community that embraces its history
  2. Affordable city for its residents AND those who want to live here (not just “workforce housing”, but also “affordable housing”)
  3. Sustainable transportation system, sustainable community
  4. Environmentally aware and friendly
  5. Comfortable city for current residents

- What we want Portsmouth to LOOK like in 2025?
1. Car free downtown/pedestrian only area
  2. Neighborhood connections, more sidewalks and bike lanes along corridors
  - 3 Preserve character of existing neighborhoods (Note: invest in history of the neighborhoods; continue to provide variety of neighborhood options)
  4. “Gateway” kiosks with public restrooms, water fountains, information linked to parking areas
  5. Small retail on ground floor storefronts

# TEMPLATE 5:

## What, if any, changes should be made to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement?

### DAY GROUP

“Portsmouth is a diverse, vibrant city which integrates a systems approach to planning that balances environmental, societal, and economic criteria in setting priorities. It is built around a commitment to the vitality and strength of both its downtown and neighborhoods. Portsmouth is a leader in implementing policies for significantly reducing its carbon footprint. Protecting its working and recreational waterfront and promoting accessible green spaces in all neighborhoods is a priority. Portsmouth develops policies which produce a diversity of housing and employment opportunities for all economic levels. It promotes neighborhood connectedness through multiple and innovative modes of transportation that provide safe walking and biking routes to all locations. It supports local arts, history, culture and lifelong learning through community building activities and educational opportunities to all of its citizens. In these ways, Portsmouth strives to be an inclusive and sustainable community.”

### GROUP A

1. Use “through diverse Housing options,” instead of “affordable housing” (12)
2. Use “Protects public’s access” to waterfront views(8)
3. Use “public spaces and streetscapes” in place of “common living” (8)
4. Use “will actively support its local arts” instead of “should....” (6)
5. Use “vibrant” in place of “most passionate” (5)

Other changes or additions we considered are:

- Use “Preserves” in place of “Lives in balance with” (1)
- Use “Supportive environment” instead of “good climate”
- Remove “take steps to” build community through

### GROUP B

1. Portsmouth should be a livable, walkable city that preserves honors its history,.
2. Lives in balance with its natural resources eco systems.
3. Protects its waterfront and views open space,
4. Provides a good climate for Supports and attracts entrepreneurial opportunity,.

5. Acts on its belief in fosters a culture of socio-economic diversity through affordable housing
6. And connects neighborhoods all parts of the city through multiple and innovative modes of transportation
7. Portsmouth should consciously support its local arts and culture
8. And take steps to build actively build community through
  - Citywide events,
  - Enhanced and beautified common living and recreating spaces
  - And neighborhood connectedness
  - Easily accessible information
  - And civic involvement.

9. In these ways, Portsmouth will remain the most historic and most passionate city in New Hampshire.

\*Note: This is a draft from May 18th. Group B will finish review of #8 and #9 and dot vote at the beginning of Session #4 on 5/28.

### GROUP C

1. Transportation – functioning like a city; get around without a car; biking, light rail, buses; need political will behind it to make it happen; regional transportation
2. Retain authenticity – blue collar/white, working port, arts and culture, small business, blend of tourism and hometown
3. Maintain welcoming character and unique character/ inclusivity of neighborhoods, predominantly safe, common spaces and common goals
4. Make other areas as special as downtown – multiple destinations- support unique neighborhoods
5. Open spaces – more in town/neighborhoods
6. Consider assigning City Councilors to each ward so each has an assigned councilor to watch over it and answer for it. The intention is not to limit who runs for council because they did not live in the “right” ward or end up having sector voting – just be sure that each ward has someone (or two) fighting for it - direct connection to Neighborhood Assoc.
7. Natural Environment – planning sea level rise, water treatment facility, noise control (trucks, motorcycles, music)

### GROUP D

1. Emphasis on locally-driven business opportunity
  2. Strengthen and be more proactive in nurturing and cultivating natural resources and introduce greenery at the same pace as brick and mortar
  3. Prioritize protection of waterfront views and access
  4. Protect the creative economy
- Other changes or additions we considered are:
- Need for civil discourse as part of “community” statement
  - The current Vision Statement is quite comprehensive, though understandably vague

### GROUP E

1. Add improved infrastructure (to part 6)
2. Encourage/foster socio-economic diversity...
3. NEW – Portsmouth vision statement is a constant living document used in decision making to be used and seen in municipal meetings; top of every agenda
4. “Affordable housing” means everyone & anyone, range of options, diverse housing stock
5. ADD: Fosters opportunities for citizen civic engagement

6. Invite people to be creative and take us farther

The Portsmouth Vision Statement is a constant living document used in decision-making. It will be used and seen at every municipal meeting and will appear on meeting agendas.

Portsmouth will strive to be a city that is highly innovative and forward-thinking in how we achieve our collective goals to address issues connected to housing, development, transportation, and climate change. We aspire to be a city with a unique sense of place and will seek new and creative ways to manage change to meet our needs.

“Portsmouth will be a livable, walkable city that preserves its history, commits to active stewardship of our natural resources, encourages and fosters socio-economic diversity through affordable housing\* and connects neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation and improved infrastructure. Portsmouth will consciously support its local arts and culture, and take steps to build community through citywide events, fostering opportunities for civic engagement, enhanced and beautified common living and recreating spaces and neighborhood connectedness.

In these ways, Portsmouth will remain the most historic and most passionate city in New Hampshire.” AND WE MEAN IT.

\* (“Affordable Housing” to mean everyone and anyone with a range of options and diverse housing stock.)

### GROUP G

1. Remove “should be” and “acts on its belief” statements and replace with positive, affirmative verbs indicating will accomplish goals in the ensuing 10 years.
2. Protect the working waterfront. Accessibility to river is important, but not at expense of working waterfront that brings ships and cargo to our shore.
3. Insert “sustainable” in phrase - entrepreneurial opportunity.
4. Include educational and employment opportunities in statement suggesting broader, more diverse economic base.
5. Remove “acts on its belief in socio-economic diversity” as it sounds as though we support class divisions remaining in place and the poor remaining poor and the disadvantaged remaining so.
6. Add “commitment” to concept of creating affordable housing, providing services and encouraging payment of a living wage for all.
7. Balance the needs of economy and needs of people to have healthy environment, thereby making: Portsmouth the best place to work, live and play for all residents.

Vision version proposed by Group G: Portsmouth will be a bikeable, walkable, accessible city that preserves its history as a working port, lives in balance with its natural resources, protects its waterfront and views, provides a good climate for sustainable entrepreneurial, educational and employment opportunities, acts on its commitment to building affordable housing, providing needed services, encouraging payment of a living wage for all its residents, and connecting its neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation. Portsmouth supports local arts, recreation and culture and will take steps to build community through city-wide events and enhanced and beautified public spaces for recreation and gatherings. By keeping the society, the economy and the environment equally balanced, Portsmouth will be the best place to live, work and play for all its residents

GROUP H

- 1. In the 2nd bullet of the 2005 Vision Statement, use more active and stronger language regarding natural resources, e.g. cares for and protects versus live in balance.
- 2. In the 8th bullet, regarding building community, emphasize the role of education, through neighborhood (elementary) schools as well as higher ed.
- 3. In the same section, emphasize the importance of building community through providing support to vulnerable communities. Examples included economically distressed residents and those recovering from or grappling with addiction.
- 4. In the 6th bullet, on connecting neighborhoods and better transportation, changes included adding language to think of the city as a whole and that we should also think beyond connecting neighborhoods to include connecting Portsmouth with Boston and Manchester through better transportation.
- 5. For the 4th bullet on affordable housing, there were votes to keep this in the vision statement as well as including language about how to achieve this, e.g. through smarter development or zoning changes.

GROUP F

- 1. “Engages citizens and governs responsively, fostering community and democracy through traditional and innovative modes of communication”
- 2. TBD

GROUP I

- Vision Statement:

Portsmouth: A beautifully green, historic, and thriving community.

GROUP J

The top five (or more) changes or additions to the 2005 Master Plan Vision Statement are:

- 1. Changed “should” to “will” for more emphasis on action
- 2. Took general “economic development” out of vision because the economic development guidance needed for future can be more specifically directed
- 3. Added “maritime heritage” to emphasize historic maritime uses and continued need to preserve maritime industry and working waterfronts
- 4. Added “local economy” to be more specific and highlight interests in finding ways to support local business/agriculture

- 5. Added accountability statement to communicate hope for future recognition of the Vision and Master Plan in City approvals/actions

New Vision Statement: Portsmouth will be a livable, pedestrian-focused, sustainable community that preserves its history, neighborhood character, natural resources and maritime heritage, supports a local economy, commits to socio-economic diversity through affordable housing, and connects neighborhoods through multiple and innovative modes of transportation. Portsmouth will support its local arts and culture and build community through citywide and neighborhood events and activities, enhance and create common living, recreational and green spaces. Portsmouth will be accountable to its community in achieving this vision.



# TEMPLATE 5:

## What are the “Priorities for Action” that will make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone in 2025?

### DAY GROUP

- 1. Affordable housing throughout the city.
- 2. Job generation to attract and retain educated, young workers.
- 3. Be a leading municipality in approaching carbon neutrality.
- 4. For new development, provide transparent, published impact studies for traffic, water/sewer usage, and use of city services such as police, fire, and trash removal.
- 5. More balance in priorities with less emphasis on downtown and more toward the neighborhoods and less emphasis on business and more on resident needs.
- 6. Establish a Neighborhood Revitalization Manager position to ensure neighborhood input to the planning process.
- 7. Safe walking and biking routes among all areas of the city.
- 8. Support the establishment of a community/ senior center that includes life-long learning opportunities.

- Other ideas we considered are:
- Infrastructure that protects our natural resources
  - Land Use: green space is mandatory and accessible for new development.
  - Buildings should fit in ( appropriate style and scale).
  - Every area of the city is given equal attention.
  - Complete the river-walk from Bow St to Peirce Island with public access throughout.
  - Linkages between neighborhoods and gateways should be inviting and green.
  - Increased attention to supporting social services.

### GROUP A

- 1. Economic Diversity
  - diverse (affordable) opportunities for businesses of all sizes, organizations & non-profits
  - Adequate supply of diverse housing options for all economic levels
- 2. Equity throughout the city – Invest, connect, & enliven all parts of Portsmouth (make all of Portsmouth as special as downtown)
  - Spread out amenities across all of Portsmouth

- Infrastructure: Curbing, sidewalks, storm drains
- Walkability, biking, traffic-calming, public transportation
- 3. Citizen input into decision-making process (of implementation of Vision Statement)
  - Expand effectiveness of getting citizen input into decision-making process
  - Ward representation?
- 4. Resource Protection & Sustainability
  - Open spaces - Energy/recycling
  - Waterfront access - waste/pollution
  - Bicycle/walking space - sustainable city practices

### GROUP B

- 1. Develop Economic Diversity & Opportunity - Actively support small business, zoning, tax incentives or partnering with the state, an educated workforce. See Template D #2.
- 2. Invest In and Maintain Infrastructure: bridges, and sidewalks.
- 3. Arts, Recreation, Culture and History - Balance old and new buildings and generations of people.
- 4. Actively Build Community - Foster civic involvement.
- 5. Environmentally Mindful - Open space and views.
- 6. Transportation – Affordable, innovative, accessible, walkable & bikeable.

Other: Creating Socio-Economic Diversity

### GROUP C

- 1. Purposeful preservation and expansion of open and recreational spaces and the waterfront.
- 2. Retain authenticity – socio-economic, cultural, racial, age, class diversity – through providing affordable housing and adequate regional transportation
- 3. Planning and Zoning policies that support:
  - a. innovative, harmonious development
  - b. affordable housing
  - c. public transportation
- 4. Diversity of Business and Industry other than Tourism

- 5. Align the use of fiscal resources in a manner that supports the vision statement.
- Other:
- Addressing the big city problems – homelessness, addiction, infrastructure, - mixed use housing to address not creating areas with bigger problems (Gosling Meadows)
  - Taxes – fiscal responsibility –stewardship of the city’s fiscal resources in a manner that supports the vision statement
  - Purposeful economic development
  - Planning and Zoning
  - Savannah as an example of innovative historic development – innovative, harmonious development within historic district
  - Purposeful preservation of open spaces – within city & downtown
  - Idea of tax like Martha’s Vineyard/Nantucket re: preserving open space
  - Not enough business and industry diversity – too much emphasis on tourism “bubble”
  - Adequate Recreation facilities

### GROUP D

- 1. Continue to implement plans related to a more walkable, bikeable city, such the the Portsmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, across the city and esp. Market St. Extension
- 2. Inclusionary zoning with “teeth” (for example- follow through on affordable housing requirements)
- 3. Take action on innovative modes of transportation (gives access to local and regional attractions – beaches, Boston, Portland, Transportation Center, etc.), for non-car owners to get more places. Accessible; adaptable for elderly non-able-bodied
- 4. Elderly services: expand zoning to include assisted living opportunities in all areas of the city; aging in place. Affordability for elderly to keep their houses while maintaining their standard of living via tax relief; review the current policy
- 5. Arts & culture: Higher level support to maintain our creative economic engine. Really empower & fund Artspeak with Arts & Culture Commission (paid staff position needs someone with direct experience, not “add-on) implement policy, advise City, EDC, alliances, etc.) Must be part of city planning. Current successful models: Sustainability - Peter Britz; Elderly affairs — Brinn Chute; Bike/ Pedestrian Plan — Juliet Walker

- Other ideas we considered are:
- Parking strategies for specific demographic needs. Requires strategy where one size does

not fit all. Sample populations: elderly; neighborhoods/residents; day workers; tourists; disabled; include resident periods, overnight, 3-day policies, snow removal; has to be an ongoing discussion (for example, anticipate Deer St garage could be outgrown & satellite parking may still be needed)

- Regulation: Online/web-based entrepreneurial marketing & business ; more peer-to-peer and non-traditional business models; Uber - de-regulate private transportation? Trade-off - protectionism and public safety? Air BnB? open constructive discussion to manage changes; one person’s opportunity is another person’s threat
- Parks/Open Spaces/Waterfront/Views: lost balance between economic development & environment & social priorities
- How would we use a “means test” to resolve opposing interests that could get us out of balance. How can we continually, in real time, weigh new ideas and developments with the public good in mind without slowing down progress?
- Housing: Mandate for mixed income; Address minimum SF; Parking; Lot sizes & uses
- Public safety - Drug epidemic and tay ahead of “big-city” issues (crime, etc.) as the popularity of Portsmouth grows

### GROUP E

- 1. Diverse housing stock - For young professionals, seniors, families, artists, etc
- 2. Continue to support community spaces and activities – such as Skating rink, Farmers market intergenerational comm’ty center and access to social services
- 3. Built environment
  - Diverse, authentic, and unique to P
  - Preserve & compliment existing historic resources
  - New construction that has human scale, height, mass (open space)
  - Walkable, bike-able and park-able
  - Different areas with stores and venues - connected and park-able
  - Not trying to replicate the past, build authentic to Portsmouth now
- 4. Diverse economy
  - Not so dependent on tourism
  - More tech businesses at Pease
  - Vibrant downtown that enables small shops
  - Strong public transportation
  - Transportation hub
  - Working waterfront
- 5. Balance of tourists and residents

- A more reasonable distribution of resources throughout city/neighborhoods/downtown
- Catering to the needs of short-term visitors and the long-term residents

6. Arts would be thriving

7. Resource protection and sustainability
- Set goals regarding carbon neutrality and ending reliance on fossil fuels

Other ideas we considered are:

- More preservation of the waterfront – re: access and visibility

GROUP F

1. Repurpose Federal Building in a thoughtful, democratic way (e.g. through juried architectural competition)
2. Rezone to ensure higher density and mixed-use – make neighborhoods more livable and leverage traditional planning (e.g. drug stores, restaurants, comprehensive transportation planning that is not “car centric”, encourage small stores).
3. Ensure Portsmouth is green and sustain-able – utilize alternative energy sources with new buildings, make composting more available, perform rooftop inventory for the entire city to as-sess use cases for solar, create incentives for clean transportation / energy (e.g. Cambridge).
4. Create policies to promote ample housing at all price levels (e.g. requiring developers to create affordable housing; higher density permitted).
5. City should take the lead in efficiency and sustainability (e.g. more efficient city vehicles).

Other ideas we considered are:

- Raise the minimum wage
- Ensure excellence in education
- Create transportation hub – park and switch to other modes
- Ensure city is funded responsibly / future revenue growth

GROUP G

1. Housing has been the consistent concern of our group. Housing for: assisted living opportuni-ties; moderate income retired people, i.e., public servants, teachers, etc.; and affordable family opportunities
2. Increased awareness of environmental concerns, guard against increasing air pollution (sprays, etc) enforcing sustainable biological practices.
3. Safety on streets, increased bike routes, safety of same; winter walkability, improved sidewalk plowing
4. Expanded greenspaces, small public pocket gardens as well as more play spaces

5. Access to the waterfront, walkway on the river

GROUP H

1. Preserve historic character, to include coherent and historic designs that keep with Portsmouth’s unique character, keep water views, and enforce building heights. Prevent the use of digital bill-boards within the city limits.
2. Support quality public schools and neighbor-hood schools.
3. Protect our environment, understand and devel-op policies to mitigate impact of climate change, promote alternative and renewable energy as well as composting.
4. Expand transportation options to alleviate congestion, offering such options as ride sharing, zip cars and bike sharing for Portsmouth and surrounding communities. Expand the routes and schedules of public transportation. Publicize al-ternative means of transportation to create more public support and greater usage.
5. Foster sustainability and establish a cohesive development plan.
6. Create the zoning and the framework to develop and expand affordable housing.

Other ideas we considered are:

- Strengthening and expanding social services, with the goal of creating a drug free community. Also establish a volunteer portal or clearing house so that volunteers can connect with local groups providing social services.
- Improving walkability and connectivity, through better sidewalk connections throughout town and also increase accessibility for the disabled.

GROUP I

1. Planning for and supporting a diverse population.
2. Implement the master plan as the guiding document for city governance.
3. Revise zoning laws to support the vision state-ment.
4. Enhance access to green, public recreational space.

Other:

- The group would like the city to continue to be proactive with its support of arts and culture.
- Develop lifelong learning opportunities.
- Connect all the neighborhoods through comprehensive transportation.

GROUP J

1. Accountability
2. Neighborhood character, infrastructure and vitality

3. Pedestrian-focused
4. Diverse transportation options
5. Socio-economic diversity through “affordable housing”
6. Local economy
7. Local arts & culture
8. Green space
9. Natural resources
10. Climate preparedness

## IV. SUMMARY

In 2005, the major theme coming out of the Master Plan review was “sustainability.” The Master Plan review process resulted in a: “clarion call for Portsmouth’s future development to be sustainable and balanced . . . (a) clear preference for investing in long-term solutions.”

The “clarion call” has not withered over the past ten years. Sustainability remains one of the top “Priorities for Action” coming out of the 2005 Master Plan review.

The 2015 Master Plan review study circles have an enhanced view of “sustainability”. The 2015 Study Circles recognize “diversity” as a key component of “sustainability”. While “supporting a diverse community” was a “priority for action” in the 2005 Master Plan, the 2015 Study Circles have articulated that to “sustain” the desired quality of life in Portsmouth, Portsmouth must be more diverse in many different ways. The Study Circles variously described the need for diversity in the form of mixed-use neighborhood zoning, housing that meets the needs of all ages and incomes, and less reliance on tourism as an economic driver. Specifically, there are calls for:

- A diverse supply of housing for all economic levels and types from young to old; single or families; abled or disabled;
- A diverse array of jobs;
- Diverse modes of transportation that is affordable, intermodal and regional;
- Planning decisions that embraces socioeconomic differences: people of all ages and economic status, not just older and wealthier;
- A local economy that is less tourism-driven, that creates opportunities for all types of entrepreneurship, including but not limited to peer to peer;
- Parking to meet the specific needs of different groups including workers, tourists, residents, and the disabled;
- A diverse built environment, not just replicating the past, but authentic to Portsmouth, new and old;
- A community that balances the different needs and interests of tourists and residents; and
- Planning for different parts of the city that provides equity throughout the community with as much focus on the neighborhoods as downtown.

The findings and recommendations of the Study Circles create definitions of “diversity” in housing, transportation, job base, land use and streetscapes that these citizens believe will enhance Portsmouth as the best place to live, work and play for everyone.

The Study Circles findings and recommendations with regard to the “Vision Statement” also have new language. Significantly, they recommend an important change in the tense of the Vision Statement. They want a Vision Statement of what “will be”, not what “should be”. As they did ten years ago, the Study Circles are not just visioning a “built environment”. Their vision is of what Portsmouth

will “look like” and “be like”.

The aspirations of the Portsmouth Listens Study Circles in 2015, as they did ten years ago, go far beyond the typical “bricks and mortar” Master Plan. Their findings and recommendations call for actions and changes that go well beyond what a city government can provide. While the core of change may lie at city hall, Portsmouth’s aspirations require public and private actions. It is a Master Plan for the entire community.

Those aspirations can only be met by a collaborative commitment to achieve what is best “for everyone”. Non-traditional business models are challenging old ordinances and regulations. The challenges are enormous as one group indicated that “one person’s opportunity is another person’s threat.” Another group noted that, in going forward, Portsmouth must understand and embrace that “public good” is a partner of “progress and profit.”

Can city government, residents, business owners and developers, and tourists find a way to work together to “make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?” The challenges are enormous, but the opportunities are even greater.