



Vision Statement:

In 2035, Ipswich is a small coastal town defined by its agricultural and natural resources; its historic downtown and vibrant local businesses; and its welcoming social fabric for residents and visitors of all ages, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Ipswich is equipped to quickly respond and appropriately manage change. The town's key infrastructure, resources, and vulnerable populations are protected and able to easily bounce back from flooding, drought, heat waves, and other climate events. The community is environmentally responsible, including conserving water and energy sustainably. New development is integrated into the community and well-designed. The town balances increased economic activity with preservation of its village character; and provides housing options; safe, sustainable transportation choices; and high-quality town services to a diversity of residents in a transparent and equitable way.

Vision Pillars, Goals, and Strategies:

RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Working collaboratively with its partners throughout the North Shore, Ipswich in 2035 is resilient and prepared to meet future challenges. Ipswich River and the Town's marshes, wildlife corridors, and other ecological resources are healthy and thriving. Ipswich is energy independent with its public buildings—and many residential and commercial buildings—powered by clean, renewable energy. In 2035, Ipswich has improved and expanded its public services and infrastructure, particularly for waste management and water supply, to support development. Regional collaborations and connections have improved, particularly around transportation and the water supply. Residents and new development conserve energy and water. Sustainability is integrated into curriculum, such as school-wide clean-up days, and into physical facilities, such as water conservation infrastructure or LED and motion-sensor lighting.

- 1. Public Infrastructure/Climate 1. RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE: Invest in natural systems and resilient infrastructure to buffer the town against anticipated climate trends, including sea level rise, drought, flooding, and heavier and more intense precipitation.**
 - a. Build on the *Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plan* and *2019 Community Resiliency Building Workshop* and prioritize the top recommendations, strategies and measures.
 - b. Continue working with neighboring communities, the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and other state organizations to share best practices and develop solutions to increase regional resiliency and address marsh and coastal erosion.
 - c. Using the most current available data, projections, and tools for extreme weather occurrences, identify high-risk infrastructure in need of reinforcement, replacement, or rehabilitation and incorporate into the Town's capital planning. As part of this assess the feasibility of reducing flood risks at Jeffrey's Neck Road, the Ipswich Mills Dam, and Downtown Ipswich, as identified in the *Great Marsh Coastal Adaptation Plan*.
 - d. Continue to assess and monitor Ipswich's carrying capacity for water quality and supply, public services and critical infrastructure to guide future sustainable growth.
 - e. Adopt land-use policies to conserve and protect key natural resources, promote infill development, and focus new development in areas best suited to accommodate it.

- f. Continue to integrate current sustainability standards for new construction and rehabilitation.
- g. Hire a town engineer to help coordinate sustainability and resiliency efforts.

2. Public Infrastructure/Climate 2. REDUCING CONSUMPTION: Conserve water, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and increase the use of renewable energy.

- a. Create incentives to encourage residents and businesses to reduce water usage through low-flow fixtures, stormwater and runoff management, green infrastructure, and “green” landscaping practices
- b. Improve Ipswich’s overall water system resiliency, as identified in the Town’s *2020 Water Neutral Growth Plan* recommendations.
- c. Work with regional partners to share best practices and develop solutions for water supply issues.
- d. Expand public outreach and education regarding system demand and capacity related to stormwater management, wastewater, and drinking water.
- e. Work with the Waste Reduction Committee to encourage businesses to reduce packaging and transition to biodegradable packaging.
- f. Work with local businesses and industries to further reduce the use of plastics, particularly single-use plastics.
- g. Adopt policies, such as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Compact Neighborhood districts, that allow compatible mixed-uses to optimize land-use, reduce car dependency, and encourage public transit, biking, and walking.
- h. Evaluate the effects of zoning regulations, such as the Wind Energy Conversion Systems and Solar Energy Collection Apparatus special regulations, to encourage, without creating unreasonable barriers, appropriate siting of alternative energy generation.
- i. Adopt a local bylaw that prohibits expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure for new construction.
- j. Increase the number of electric vehicle charging stations.
- k. Work towards full electrification to the extent feasible within the next 20 years. Starting immediately with requiring new construction to be electric-only appliances (perhaps done limiting GHG emissions), and developing education programs and website information to assist all residents to move toward full electrification of residential energy use over the next 20 years.

3. Public Infrastructure/Climate 5. NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION: Protect open space and natural resources, including the Ipswich River watershed, the Great Marsh, beaches and dunes, clam flats, forests, wildlife habitat, and other critical ecosystems.

- a. Evaluate land-use policies and plans, such as the Open Space Preservation Zoning (OSPZ) provision and *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, to ensure consistency with protecting sensitive resource areas from development impacts.
- b. Work with landowners, land trusts, and municipal resources to identify, protect, and preserve critical areas for wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, agriculture and shellfish production, and scenic landscapes.
- c. Educate and increase advocacy for policies that protect Ipswich’s natural resources and ecosystems, such as drinking water protection, flood control, pollution attenuation, wildlife management.
- d. Explore using protected lands to provide nature-based solutions around stormwater management, flood storage and protection, and erosion control and land management best practices.

4. Economic Development 4. ECO-ECONOMY: Support Ipswich’s natural resource-based and agricultural economy.

- a. Support local farmers and clambers by providing access to technical assistance and resources, including ongoing trainings and workshops, and ensuring that local regulations continue to support farming and farmers.
- b. Address ongoing water quality issues to preserve and support the shell fishing industry.

RESPONSIVE AND DIVERSE DEVELOPMENT: New housing and business development continue to be concentrated in walkable areas, including the downtown and near the train station. Not only is new development sustainable, it pays special attention to the Town's historic character, natural green spaces, walkability, and access to services. The Town's housing stock in 2035 is a mix of apartments, condominiums, and single-family houses that can accommodate a range of socially and economically diverse households, including young adults, older adults, large families, and people with disabilities. Diverse commercial development offers new amenities, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and to increase the Town's commercial tax base. Existing major employers continue to adapt, innovate, and grow, with supportive regulations in place, such as streamlined permitting, flexible zoning, and transportation connectivity.

1. Housing 1. HOUSING CHOICE: Provide a range of housing choices to foster a socio-economically diverse community and to reflect the changing residential preferences and needs in our state, region, and local community.

- a. Coordinate a town-sponsored campaign to promote ongoing education and advocacy to support creation of more diverse housing options including affordable housing options.
- b. Create a "Housing for All" group in Ipswich to increase leadership capacity and local support for more diverse housing options, including affordable housing options. Seek support from CHAPA through its Municipal Engagement Initiative, which works with residents on the ground to change the conversation and support existing local efforts in favor of more affordable housing.
- c. Strengthen the Inclusionary Zoning provisions to promote on-site or off-site unit production as the Town's preferred options and payments in-lieu as a secondary choice.
- d. Provide more flexibility to create Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and tiny houses or other small detached accessory units. For example, ADUs could be allowed on nonconforming lots smaller than 10,000 s.f.
- e. Seek designation as an AARP "Age-Friendly Community" to advance local efforts to help older adults live easily and comfortably in the community. Following the Age-Friendly Process and Program Cycle and working closely with AARP representatives, establish a commission or other group, conduct a community needs assessment, develop an action and evaluation plan, and implement the goals of the plan.
- f. Restructure and expand funding for the existing local first-time homebuyers programs to assist lower-income households most in need.
- g. Connect income-eligible senior homeowners to existing programs that assist with housing costs, improvements, maintenance needs, and house-sharing match-up programs.
- h. Expand the capacity of the Housing Trust to produce housing units, including through reuse and rehabilitation, focusing on smaller affordable units, affordable family units, and net zero units.
- i. Work with the Housing Authority to explore opportunities to expand its stock of affordable units and support the organization's development and management capacity.

- j. Consider zoning amendments to General Business, Center Business, Highway Business, and Intown Residence districts to allow well-designed multi-family and/or mixed-use options by-right with administrative site plan review and design guidelines.
- k. Repurpose underutilized parcels, including town owned and tax foreclosed property, for the creation of affordable or mixed-income housing options.
- l. Consider zoning amendments to explicitly permit congregate housing and co-living, including in the Great Estate Preservation Development and Open Space Preservation (Cluster) zoning provisions.

2. Housing 2. LOCATION: Create new housing options in neighborhoods near shops and services and supported by public water and sewer, strong schools, and welcoming community.

- a. Consider adoption of a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District with associated design guidelines to promote well-designed Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) with mixed-income housing near the train station.
- b. Consider zoning amendments to allow mixed-use commercial and residential development along Route 1.

3. Economic Development 1. EXISTING AND NEW BUSINESSES: Cultivate a diverse economic base and support existing businesses, particularly small businesses.

- a. Expand the Town’s capacity for economic development by hiring an economic development planner to specialize in long-term planning and marketing Ipswich to future employers.
- b. Create an economic development strategic plan to identify a comprehensive, proactive economic development strategy to support strong fiscal, market, and economic health.
- c. Establish a loan program to support new and existing small businesses. Examples of these programs include tenant improvement programs, neighborhood retail assistance, or small business loan programs.
- d. Work with business owners, developers, and entrepreneurs to regularly assess and support the needs of existing business—either through a business retention program or business satisfaction survey.
- e. Review zoning for businesses to maximize flexibility and allow property owners to easily adapt to the changing economic environment.
- f. Work with Ipswich schools to foster opportunities to partner with local industry leaders to better prepare students for vocational and alternative career paths.
- g. Better support and connect small businesses with resources, such as hosting a resource fair or workshops on marketing and business development.

THRIVING AND ATTRACTIVE TOWN CENTER: Downtown Ipswich continues to be a popular gathering space for town events, programs, and performances for community members of all ages. The Town continues to foster social connections that celebrate the increasing diversity of its residents. Residents are able to stroll along the Ipswich River using the expanded Riverwalk. Downtown storefronts are still populated by local owner-operated businesses—and more Ipswich residents work from their homes or in town.

1. Economic Development 3. TOWN CENTER: Strengthen town center’s economic and cultural vibrancy by preserving its historic authenticity, connecting people to the river, and protecting resources from flooding.

- a. Encourage residential and mixed-use development in the village center to increase activity at local retail and restaurants.
- b. Establish a private, non-profit Main Streets Organization to help fund improvements and market businesses in the village center.

- c. Seek a Massachusetts Cultural District designation for the area around the village center to bring together and promote Ipswich’s business, arts and cultural institutions, and historic organizations.
- d. Strengthen design guidelines and design review process for the Central Business, General Business, and Highway Business districts to ensure that new development is compatible with the Town’s goals.
- e. Ease permitting for outdoor seating, pop-up shops, and other public realm infrastructure
- f. Work with the arts community to develop and install public art throughout the village center.
- g. Better promote events, sites, and opportunities to residents and visitors.
- h. Work with the Ipswich Essex Explorer to better promote Ipswich’s town center as a destination for visitors.
- i. Amend zoning to make it easier to establish home-based businesses in and near the Town Center.

2. Economic Development 5. TOURISM: Expand and enhance the characteristics that attract visitors to Ipswich, including its local and regional natural, cultural, and historic environments.

- a. Establish a Tourism Committee (which can include members of the Cultural Council and other existing and related groups)
- b. Develop a Strategic Tourism Plan to create an organized and structured framework for tourism development and promotion within the community—including a cohesive community brand and identity to market to visitors. This plan can include planning for accommodations, transportation, tourist activities, management, regulation, as well as marketing and promotion.
- c. Support existing community partners, such as Historic Ipswich and the Trustees for Public Land, through improved marketing and advertising, such as the creation of a “Visit Ipswich” webpage.
- d. Leverage nearby attractions , such as the Essex National Heritage Area and Ipswich-Essex Explorer, to attract new visitors to Ipswich.
- e. Promote active transportation, including biking and walking, as a way to explore the village center, Crane Beach, Russell Orchards, and other surrounding attractions.
- f. Promote locally produced food, including shellfish, and beverages to capitalize on emerging agritourism and agri-culinary trends.

3. Transportation 4. PARKING: Develop smarter parking management policies for downtown and around the commuter rail.

- a. Develop consistent parking management through regulations, restrictions, and signage in Town Center, including striped on-street parking spaces and improving parking-related signage and wayfinding.
- b. Create a Joint Management Agreement for the Hammatt Street parking lot to coordinate multiple owners.
- c. Evaluate need for handicap and electric vehicle parking in Town Center.
- d. Provide secure, covered bicycle parking at train station and bicycle racks downtown.
- e. Review on-street parking standards to better serve the needs of older adults and residents with mobility challenges, such as spaces that are at sidewalk level.

SAFE AND CONNECTED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK: In 2035, residents opt for more sustainable forms of transportation, such as biking, walking, and public transit. At least fifty-percent of Ipswich commuters use alternative transportation methods, traveling on foot, by bike, or riding the commuter rail or bus, to get to work. New residents are drawn to the community’s small-town feel that provides easy transit connection to Boston and communities along the North Shore.

1. Transportation 1. LOCAL OPTIONS: Improve and expand the local transportation network to better serve all residents and encourage cleaner and healthier mobility choices, including biking and walking.

- a. Complete and begin to implement a town-wide Bicycle Plan and develop a town-wide pedestrian plan. As part of these plans, assess the pedestrian sidewalk network to identify gaps in the network and non-ADA compliance and identify arterial roadways where bicycle facilities are appropriate, such as County Road, Central Street, High Street, and South Main Street. The plans should also evaluate and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and ADA compliance at critical intersections, such as those along County Road and High Street in and near downtown.
- b. Establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the Town’s bicycle and pedestrian plans and to improve cycling and walking conditions in Ipswich.
- c. Continue to advance projects identified in the Town’s *Complete Streets Prioritization Plan*, including the pedestrian improvement projects under construction at Little Neck Road and High Street/Short Street.
- d. Due to COVID-19, explore options to repurpose parking and travel lanes to expand pedestrian and bicycle capacity and safety on a temporary and/or permanent basis.
- e. Adopt Sustainable Neighborhood Road Design through the Subdivision Road Standards to encourage walking, biking, and low impact development.
- f. Audit trail accessibility and expand accessible community trails.
- g. Explore expansion of the existing Town shuttle service, which currently operates at capacity.

2. Transportation 2. REGIONAL CONNECTIONS: Work with the MBTA, neighboring communities, and other partners to expand regional transit options to Boston and throughout Essex County.

- a. Collaborate with adjacent communities to explore potential demand for a shuttle between destinations in other communities.
- b. Collaborate with MBTA and Cape Ann Transportation Authority to explore options for expanding bus service.

3. Transportation 3. SAFETY: Make roads safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, especially in highly-trafficked areas including downtown, other commercial areas, and near schools.

- a. Evaluate critical intersections and roadways to improve safety for all users. These critical intersections include County Road/South Main Street; County Road/Poplar Street; Market Street/Central Street; High Street/Central Street (Lords Square); High Street between Lowes Lane and School Street; Route 133/High Street; County Road between Lanes End and Essex Road; and High Street at Shaw's Plaza.
- b. Develop a traffic calming policy to guide implementation of measures to improve safety and reduce vehicle speeds, particularly in downtown and neighborhoods. These include narrowing roadways, separating vehicles from pedestrians and bicyclists, and reducing pedestrian crossing distance.
- c. Continue participation of Middle School, Doyon Memorial School, and Winthrop School in the MassDOT Safe Routes to School Program. Apply for SRTS infrastructure grant to improve safety and connectivity for children walking and biking to school.
- d. Consider town-wide 25 MPH in thickly settled areas unless otherwise posted.

SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES: In 2035, elected leaders, boards and committees, and town staff work collaboratively to achieve the community’s vision and goals and to provide services in a transparent and equitable manner. Residents with differing opinions are able to problem solve through collaboration and consensus-building. Ipswich’s students are supported through a variety of educational opportunities and extracurriculars.

1. Public Infrastructure/Climate 4. COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES: Serve and protect all residents, in particular Ipswich’s older adults, students, and vulnerable populations.

- a. Build on identified societal strengths identified in the *Ipswich Community Resiliency Building Report* by working with stakeholders, civic organizations and municipal leaders to implement creative and best practices for enhancing awareness and delivering needed services to targeted

populations, such as youth, aging adults, and other vulnerable or marginalized populations, in a manner best suited for the cohort.

- b. Develop outreach programs to inventory and understand the service needs of specific populations within the community as well as those of the general population.
- c. Connect residents in coastal hazard zones, particularly those over age 65 and including seasonal and/or renter occupied homes, with emergency protocols, local shelters and services, and other resources.
- d. Cultivate a proactive, resilient approach to health at the convergence of health care, public safety and public health with the creation of an integrated mobile health care program (Paramedicine).
- e. Promote walkability, personal mobility, and support Aging-in-Place initiatives.
- f. Expand inter-departmental collaboration and resource sharing to maximize the value, efficiencies, and services offered to the public. As part of this, conduct regular assessments to ensure that Town departments have adequate staffing and resources.