

Vision and Goals Document New Bern Historic Preservation Plan

Process

The vision and goals proposed here are the results of community input. The consulting team met with the Historic Preservation Plan Advisory Committee on December 8, 2010 to review their vision and expectations of the plan through a facilitated roundtable discussion. On December 9, 2010 there were two public meetings attended by a combined total of 44 people that included exercises to determine public support and expectations of a preservation plan. Participants received a brief presentation on several aspects of historic preservation at the local level, reviewed and commented on maps of the city and its historic districts, responded to a visual preference survey and were directed to an on-line survey. The on-line survey of thirteen questions was created on surveymonkey.com and distributed widely through various outlets. It was “open” for participation for approximately 8 weeks and completed by 83 participants. And eleven of twenty stakeholders, indentified by city staff, agreed to be interviewed at length on many aspects of New Bern and historic preservation. Stakeholders interviewed were: Susan Moffat-Thomas, Jimmy Hicks, Joe Mansfield, Nancy Hollows, Kaye Williams, Jack Morton, Tim Thompson, Julie Marsden, Steve and Sabrina Bengel, Tom Balance and Chris Hoveland. Interviews were confidential to the extent that data gleaned from them will be shared but not specifically attributed.

Vision

A vision statement can be defined as a statement that describes a desired future status for a program, organization or community. A vision should be long-term and aspirational. As such it provides a philosophical framework for goals, recommendations and actions. While goals, recommendations, and actions are more concrete and tangible; a vision provides a broad rubric and a common hope and dream for the future. The vision statement proposed below was drawn from public input and includes several key points made consistently through all types of input—the concept of balance between what can be perceived of as competing interests including private property rights and regulation that protects public interests; equal consideration to New Bern’s past and its future; new construction particularly in undeveloped and outparcels; New Bern’s resources including but not limited to historic architecture, archaeological sites, cultural landscape, vistas , waterways and viewsheds; the need to include a diversity of experience across the racial, ethnic and socio economic spectra; an acknowledgement of the city’s unique character; and a desire that the vision result in a high quality of life for visitors and residents that is distinctive.

The proposed Vision Statement for New Bern’s Historic Preservation Plan is

New Bern's preservation programs will create a distinctive and high quality of life by balancing the past and the future, private rights and public values, expansion and infill, reflecting the diversity of people and resources which make it unique.

Goals

While not as expansive as a vision, goals are still broad. They reflect the vision but begin to direct it toward objectives and actions which are measureable and definable benchmarks. The goals outlined below capture the issues most often and consistently identified both by the public and by city staff. They will ultimately be further delineated by recommendations and actions in the final plan document.

The proposed goals for New Bern's Historic Preservation Plan are:

One

Protect New Bern's Historic Resources

Two

Expand designation, recognition and participation to include more diversity

Three

Increase awareness and education about New Bern's history, resources, and preservation.

Four

Identify and increase the resources for preservation and build capacity among partners.

Five

Review and improve existing municipal preservation program infrastructure and implementation

Six

Develop policies to address development including infill, parking and height issues.

The final plan will also include recommendations and actions to include a detailed evaluation and discussion of the current character of the four National Register historic districts with visuals Recommendations for Public Education and Outreach, Recommendations for Historic Preservation Commission Education and Training, Tools for measuring Community Character, Identification of future historic districts, landmarks and sites city-wide, Identification of additional tools, strategies and action statements for improving the quality of the preservation efforts, programs, and processes.