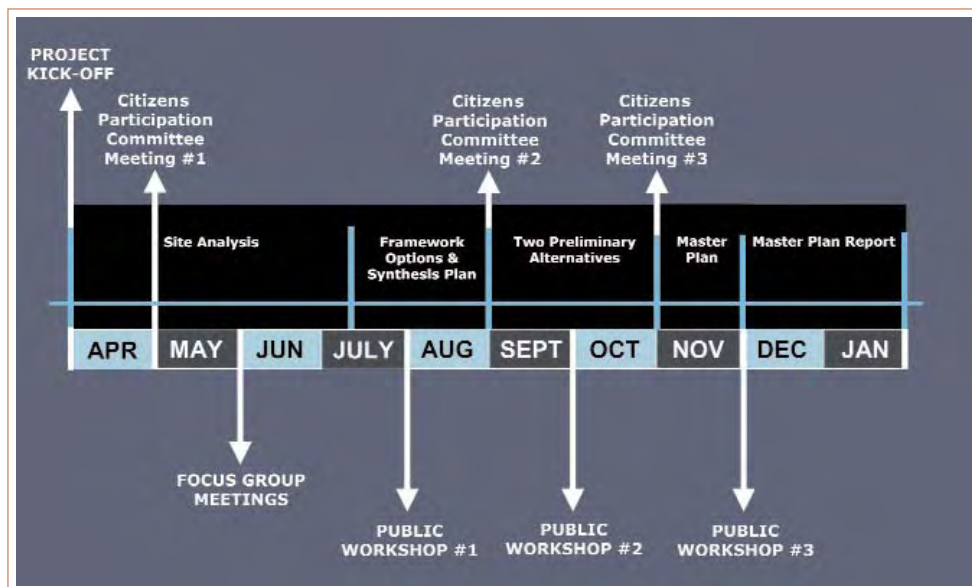


3. Community Participation Process

Residents, business owners, City officials, and other interested stakeholders were part of the planning process to prepare the Master Plan for the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer (HLS) District. The community outreach for the Master Plan was conducted by the New Bedford City Planning Department which organized the Citizens Participation Committee and helped plan several Focus Group meetings as well as public meetings during 2007.



The diagram illustrates the timeline of meetings and the development process resulting in the final Master Plan.

Citizens Participation Committee

The formation of a Citizens Participation Committee (CPC) is a requirement of all Commonwealth of Massachusetts recognized Urban Renewal Plans, which are submitted and approved by the State. Having a CPC involved in the planning process ensures that the resulting Master Plan is one that is community supported. Because of the formality of the URP process, the CPC's role and ideas must be documented as part of the URP report, and submitted to the State for acceptance. The City of New Bedford is not proceeding with a formal URP, but the required public participation process was followed so if the City chooses to proceed with such a plan in the future, we anticipate that the public participation requirement will have been met.

The HLS District's CPC was comprised of property owners, business owners, and residents who had and have active interest in the future of the HLS District. During the course of the project, there were three CPC meetings held on these dates:

- April 24, 2007
- September 10, 2007
- October 23, 2007

The first CPC meeting was held at the New Bedford Public Library on April 24, 2007. The meeting purpose was for the BSC Group and RKG Associates consultant team to meet the CPC members. There were five CPC members present at the first meeting as well as representatives from the City's Planning Department. A Chairman was designated, Jennifer Gonsalves, and the meeting ensued. This meeting also provided the opportunity to give an overview of the Commonwealth's formal

URP process. Attendees discussed the role that the CPC would play during the next few months. Specifically, the CPC would direct the development of the HLS District's Urban Revitalization Strategy, and could either support all or some of the Urban Revitalization Strategy recommendations made by the consultant team.

On September 10, 2007, the second CPC meeting was held. The consultant team of BSC Group and RKG presented their analysis of the Project Area. BSC presented the building and site inventories that had been compiled over the previous two months, as well as two conceptual development plans. These plans were graphic development plans for the Project Area, built upon the analysis of the Project Area's existing conditions, analysis of the market conditions, and the preferred land use and density diagram selected by the City's Planning Department. RKG presented an overview of market conditions and their analysis of assessed property values in the area.

The third CPC meeting, held on October 23, 2007, focused on the review of two preliminary alternative development plans that had been presented by the consultant team during an October 1, 2007 public meeting. The CPC directed the consultant team as to which features of each preliminary alternative should be incorporated into the final Master Plan. This feedback was based on comments aired at the October 1, 2007 public meeting as well as the opinions of CPC members.

Together with the CPC, the consultant team and the New Bedford City Planning Department gained an understanding of the Project Area, developed organized focus groups, planned for a successful public meeting process, and created a final Master Plan that was community supported.



Preliminary Alternative #1 – Adaptive Reuse – shows future development proceeding using as many existing buildings as possible.



Preliminary Alternative #2 – New Construction – shows future development proceeding by demolishing and rebuilding a more significant number of existing structures.

Focus Group Meeting Strategy

A list of individuals, groups, and governmental agencies that were perceived as "stakeholders" in the future development of the HLS District was compiled. Next, stakeholders were contacted and notified to attend one of three focus group meetings and to share their advice and input with the CPC, consultant team, and New Bedford Planning Department. Focus groups concentrated on the following topics:

- Public infrastructure and resources
- Environmental and water related resources
- Community and economic development

The focus group meetings were held in staggered sessions over one workday on June 5, 2007. The meetings were well attended, with representatives from a cross-section of interested state, regional, and city agencies.

These focus groups provided valuable information related to the Project Area and its future development. This information, along with feedback from public meetings, was incorporated directly into the Master Plan.

Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held throughout the Master Planning process; these were held on July 24, 2007, October 1, 2007, and December 4, 2007.

Each public meeting was advertised in the local newspaper, and announced on local radio stations, prior to each meeting. Mailings to businesses and residents within the HLS Project Area were sent as required.

There were approximately 20 residents, property owners, and other interested individuals in attendance at the first public meeting on July 24, 2007. An overview of the Project Area's existing conditions and the master planning process was presented. The master planning process was described as an implementation strategy that would be built upon previous planning efforts and would define specific public actions and improvements intended to attract private development. Brief descriptions of the URP (the basis for the Urban Revitalization Strategy) and DIF were also presented.

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

HICKS-LOGAN-SAWYER (HLS) **Master Plan** AND URBAN RENEWAL PLAN PUBLIC MEETING

6PM \ MONDAY OCTOBER 1 2007

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

HICKS-LOGAN-SAWYER (HLS) MASTER PLAN AND URBAN RENEWAL PLAN PUBLIC MEETING

MONDAY OCTOBER 1, 2007 AT 6PM

**COASTLINE ELDERLY SERVICES
1646 PURCHASE STREET
NEW BEDFORD, MA**

Mayor Lang & the City of New Bedford Planning Department want to hear from you! Time is running out. Please take this opportunity to participate in a meeting that will shape the future growth and redevelopment possibilities in the HLS area and to learn about the urban renewal process.

This is your community--don't let others control New Bedford's future!

All public meetings were televised and are available through the City's cable service.

Following the project introduction by the consultant team, all meeting attendees discussed the HLS District together, in a round-table format. Aerial photos as well as preliminary analysis diagrams were referenced as the group shared their thoughts on future development, open space, area assets, and liabilities. Many insights were shared that could only come from those closest to the area--the residents of New Bedford. Issues and concerns such as "How can we be good to good businesses and good neighbors?" as well as a concern for the affordability of housing to be proposed in the HLS District, showed the deep level of compassion that the meeting attendees felt for their neighbors.

The second public meeting held on October 1, 2007 included the presentation of two preliminary alternative development plans:

- Preliminary Alternative 1 focused on adaptive reuse and showed future development proceeding using as many existing buildings as possible; demolishing only the buildings in "severe disrepair."
- Preliminary Alternative 2 focused on new construction and showed future development proceeding by demolishing and rebuilding a more significant number of existing structures. This alternative included demolishing buildings categorized as in "moderate disrepair" or "severe disrepair" as well as buildings that were not compatible with the preferred future land use.

It was clear from the community's feedback that a majority of those in attendance were in favor of a plan that would maintain as many existing structures and businesses as possible. The level of compassion that was seen at the first public meeting was visible again at this second public meeting. The overriding desire of the community to support and encourage the area's existing businesses, and to add supporting elements to the neighborhood, was apparent.

The third and final public meeting, held on December 4, 2007, attracted approximately 40 interested individuals. Again, a brief overview of the master planning process and a review of the Project Area site analysis was presented. The final Master Plan was also presented and included many elements from each of the two preliminary alternatives, feedback from the community, advice given to the consultant team at focus group meetings, and guidance from the CPC. Feedback on the final Master Plan was overwhelmingly positive.