

TO: LUORC
FROM: Beth Della Valle and Jane Lafleur
SUBJECT: Youth Survey, Follow up to Workshop 3, Draft Vision Statement, and Preparations for Workshops 4 and 5
DATE: December 8, 2010

1. Youth Survey

Attached are the results of the Youth Survey conducted at Lincoln Academy last spring. The results are for the Newcastle students only. Jane is still working with a Youth Intern from Lincoln Academy and we can still offer the opportunity to get feedback from a select group of students if LUORC wishes to pose additional questions to the students. It is unlikely we can conduct another school-wide survey, but we can pull together the student committee and ask them to solicit input from Newcastle students. Please give direction on this after considering the alternative workshops below.

Do you want to add the results of the Student Survey to the Newcastle 2030 Vision Statement? If so, should it be included in the Appendices or be featured more prominently in another way?

2. Follow Up to Workshop 3

By now, we're hoping that you've reviewed the PPT from Workshop 3 and the notes summarizing the keypad polling, sticky notes, and large group discussion. We offer a few conclusions, questions, and recommendations below to take us to the next steps in finalizing the Newcastle 2030 Vision Statement and possible approaches for Workshops 4 and 5.

3. Keypad Polling and Draft Newcastle 2030 Vision Statement

First, it's important to acknowledge that the keypad polling was informal and represents the perspective of a relatively small group of people. Recognizing these limitations, we are relatively comfortable observing a few things, have a few recommendations, and turn to you for direction on some next steps.

The poll appears to be generally supportive of the general statements in the vision statement (items 1-7 or slides 12-18). Between 54% and 74% of respondents "completely" or "mostly" agreed with these statements (the lowest was 54% and the rest were 63% or higher); 10% to 28% expressed "some concerns". In general, we recommend that these statements remain unchanged unless you have recommendations or how some areas should be adjusted.

We believe it might help folks understand the statements about the different geographic areas if we include a map of each area (taken from the district map we used for the small group exercises in the Vision Statement. Do you think we should add them?

There was lower support for the specific geographic areas, though most garnered 50% or more agreement ("completely" or "mostly"). Damariscotta Mills statements were "completely" or "mostly" agreed with by 85%, with only 5% having some concerns – probably because the statements called for the village remaining largely as it is today. Newcastle Village garnered 57% "completely" or "mostly" in agreement, with 30% expressing "some concerns". Academy Hill statements received 53% "completely"

or “mostly” in agreement, with 22% having “some concerns”. Sheepscot received 50% agreement (“completely” or “mostly”), with 27% having “some concerns”. Unless you have areas where you have recommendations for adjustment, we recommend that the statements for Newcastle Village, Academy Hill, Damariscotta Mills, and Sheepscot remain unchanged.

Not surprisingly, there was far more disagreement about the statements for North and South Newcastle. Only 30% agreement (“completely” or “mostly”), with 23% expressing “some concerns”, 16% saying we only “got a few things correct”, 14% saying the statement were “completely off”, and 16% being “not sure”. Disagreement was even more pronounced for South Newcastle, possibly because it encompassed at least two, if not three, distinct areas – the southern natural resource areas, areas along Route 1, and the River Road. Only 25% “completely” or “mostly” agreed with the statements, 18% had “some concerns”, 30% said the statements only got “a few things correct”, 16% said they were “completely off”, and 11% were “not sure”. The sticky notes and large group comments shed further light on the keypad responses and suggests, not surprisingly, that there is fairly widespread disagreement about the vision for these areas, ranging from liking allowing the broad range of options from essentially allowing the market to disperse growth across the area to balancing efforts to conserve land with dispersed development to concentrating growth in hamlets and conservation/cluster subdivisions and large, country estate sized lots. In addition, there appear to be two particular areas of disagreement – whether to allow or require conservation/cluster subdivisions and whether to allow single lots on 2 acre or 10 acre lots. The straw polls in the large group discussion add a bit more information:

- Allow conservation/cluster subdivisions - 28 yes, 1 no, 4 uncertain
- Hamlets - 24 yes, 3 no, 9 uncertain
- Neighborhood markets - 14 yes, 10 no, 6 uncertain
- North Newcastle cluster - 32 yes, 2 no, 7 uncertain
- North Newcastle country estates lots - 22 yes, 8 no, 8 uncertain
- North Newcastle scattered 2 acre lots - 15 yes, 10 no, 12 uncertain

In contemplating these results, we encourage you to remember that Newcastle’s development has largely occurred on an ad hoc lot-by-lot basis, rather than in planned subdivisions. With no significant change in regulation, the trend of dispersed development along the Town’s roadways is likely to continue into the future.

Furthermore, we need to ask you whether you believe it is possible to build a consensus among the strong camps for the different perspectives on how the Town might grow within the time and budget constraints of this project. If so, we have a couple of suggestions. First, we could redo the polling with smaller, more precise questions, breaking questions down into individual options, like hamlets, require conservation/cluster, allowed conservation/cluster, estate lots, 2 acre lots. This might be expanded with a few innovative techniques like setting overall maximum densities for existing parcels, but allowing smaller lot sizes (say, 1-2 acres to allow landowners to carve off lots for their children or for sale to support personal expenses (college, retirement, whatever) and/or incentives to encourage folks to develop in more desirable patterns.

Another approach might be to develop, review, and discuss 3-4 distinct alternative visions to see whether that either brings folks closer together or at clarifies the areas of disagreement. For example, one approach is the hodgepodge expressed in the current draft language, which continues current trends of dispersed, roadside and woodland development. Another might be small, compact, mixed use hamlets, required conservation/cluster subdivisions, and scattered estate lots. And yet another might be small, compact, mixed use hamlets, allowed/perhaps incentivized conservation/cluster subdivisions, and 2 acre scattered lots.

Recognizing that it may take considerable time to reach a consensus, yet another approach might be a bit more incremental. For example, establish relatively modest quantitative measures that reflect your vision of the amount and type of development and/or conservation you'd like to see, then measure your actual experience annually against those measures and report them in the Town's Annual Report. At some reasonable interval, say five years, analyze the overall trends. If your efforts are working, keep going. If they are not working at all, you will have built a case for some significant changes in the way you manage your growth. If it's sort of working, but not entirely, that will be a message that some adjustment, but not wholesale abandonment of your management approach is in order.

In each case, there is probably a need for public education about the likely outcome of trends and possibly, for community waste disposal and water supply systems to debunk myths and provide accurate information.

As you consider how you would like to proceed, here are a few more thoughts to keep in mind. Starting Workshop 3 with expanded polling about a vision for future development will take time and may make it difficult to dedicate adequate time to discussing the specific Gateway 1 Action items and bringing the project to a successful conclusion with just one more Workshop (5). Starting with Gateway 1 to identify areas of agreement might build some consensus about the future vision in some areas and help whittle down the areas of disagreement. Furthermore, if no additional work is contemplated with the Youth Group, we might be able to shift funds to allow for a Workshop 6.

4. Alternative Ways to Approach Workshops 4, 5, and maybe 6?

In light of these observations, here are a couple of alternative ways to structure the remaining workshops.

- Alternative 1. Present the 3-4 distinct future growth scenarios. Have small group discussion about the pros and cons of the alternative approaches. Then do keypad polling, breaking the questions down by scenario or in the smaller, more specific bits. Then provide a brief overview of Gateway 1 (repeating, but shortening what was presented at Workshop 3), then focusing on the Gateway 1 actions¹, having some large or small group discussion, and keypad polling to identify areas of agreement and disagreement.

¹ We are in the process of evaluating your ordinances to see which items you may already be doing, so we can focus discussion on those that you are not doing.

- Alternative 2. Present the shortened, general presentation on Gateway 1 and its action items. Discuss the action statements in small groups. Based on the report out of the small groups, identify areas of agreement and disagreement with keypad polling. Continue discussion about areas of disagreement in another round of small groups. If time allows, continue discussion of/polling about conflicts in vision for North and South Newcastle.
- Alternative 3. Suspend further work with Youth Group and add a Workshop 6. Workshop 4 would focus on conflicts in the Draft Vision Statement (primarily North and South Newcastle) and the rural portions of the Comp Plan. Workshop 5 would focus on Gateway 1 action items. Workshop 6 would focus on bringing the two together.
- Alternative 4. Another approach you might suggest or a hybrid of those described above.

Once we know what approach you'd like to take, we'll forward you a draft agenda via email for your review and comment. Once we pin down the agenda, we'll start preparing the powerpoint for your review.