



THE NEW ENGLAND PLAN

*Historic New England Strategic Agenda
2021-2025*



OUR STRATEGIC VISION

Our recently adopted Strategic Agenda, 2021 through 2025, sets in motion an ambitious workplan, with five strategic directions defining exciting forward movement for Historic New England. We're delighted to present our plan outline on the following pages, and we look forward to the dynamic conversations, partnerships, and efforts ahead, across the Historic New England community, to realize our goals.

This new agenda is based on an intensive planning process, anchored by the foundational tenets of inclusion, sustainability, and innovation. We began with rigorous task forces to compel new mandates for inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, spearheaded by leadership from both our Board of Trustees and staff. The Board of Trustees Strategic Planning Committee, which led and provided oversight for planning, comprised the entire Executive Committee of the Board, with additional Trustees representing both at-large interests as well as our collections and historic sites.

So much is already underway. While it will take time to fulfill the full promise of our strategic priorities, we are retaining scholars to deepen and expand the stories we share, taking public positions to support historic preservation in the face of overreaching development, increasingly activating our landscapes, and launching new education programs. We are reimagining key Historic New England sites, in Boston and Haverhill, Massachusetts, and other locations. It's a fiercely innovative and dynamic time at Historic New England, with a growing membership across the region. And our plan is not a static one; it will evolve as we listen, learn, and grow as an organization.

Our work is brimming with optimism. All of our efforts are grounded in the belief that historic preservation is a leading discipline and approach to achieve greater livability in our neighborhoods, enduring sustainability for our communities, and stronger resilience for our planet. Our role in heritage education is thrilling and offers an extraordinary opportunity to go deeper, sharpen our discovery tools, and amplify the true diversity of the New England experience.

To all of our members, volunteers, friends, staff, and leadership, thank you for your support and dedication to Historic New England. It's a true honor to be on this remarkable and rewarding journey together as we embrace a new strategic agenda and pursue goals of purpose, meaning, and impact.

Vin Cipolla, President and CEO





The New England experience is

**POWERFUL,
PERSONAL,
and DIVERSE,**

and it provides a compelling and enduring framework for sustainability and resilience as we consider and navigate the dynamic changes and possibilities affecting the region in the years ahead.

Historic New England provides an unparalleled resource for learning and discovery about New England, through its museums, farms, landscapes, collections, easement program, and education initiatives, spanning all six states.

Over the next five years, Historic New England will focus on the following major strategic directions that comprise **The New England Plan**:

REACH higher to be the leading voice for the full New England experience through authentic, inclusive, bold, and innovative storytelling, leveraging our museums, sites, collections, archives, easement program, and new opportunities across the region

BUILD a powerful network of historic preservation and community stakeholders by ambitiously pursuing new avenues for engagement, membership, and partnership

BECOME a visible center of excellence in urgent advocacy and policy initiatives in support of preservation, sustainability and livability, particularly in our site communities

EXPAND deep and meaningful engagement in our historic landscapes and farms to promote the region's landscape heritage and spirit, and motivate sustainability practice

SHARE the transformative impact of our education programs with youth regionally to reach more students, their families, and communities building lifelong connections

Why Historic New England?

Historic New England is the only organization committed to protecting and sharing the full New England experience, with over 110 years of pioneering preservation practice and public engagement across the region. Our museums, landscapes, collections, archives, and easement program offer an unparalleled framework for outreach, interpretation, engagement, and education across New England – for sharing our region's unique history, and for deepening an appreciation for saving the past and benefiting the future through advocating for preservation, sustainability, and livability in the region's communities.





The Roadmap & CORE INITIATIVES

Our strategic agenda provides the vision and framework for the next five years, and is adaptable as external factors require us to adjust priorities along the way. To launch our new strategic agenda, we will focus resources on specifically outlined priorities and initiatives developed through the planning process.

We use the tenets of *inclusion, sustainability, and innovation* to guide our thinking. While these are broad terms, they are useful lenses to apply as we evaluate the totality of our organization. Forerunner trustee-level and staff-led task forces on inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility set critical frameworks for planning, establishing comprehensive and integrated benchmarks and steps to make inclusion central in all we do.

1 THE RECENTERED SITE EXPERIENCE

Make our sites destinations of choice through creative, innovative, and inclusive experiences for all

2 THE OTIS HOUSE REDEVELOPMENT

Be a leading voice for community livability and collaboration, and center Otis House as a resource in the neighborhood transformation and a gateway for Historic New England

3 THE HAVERHILL HUB OPPORTUNITY

Optimize the Haverhill facility as a centerpiece for discovery, public programming and education, and become a collaborator and vital partner in the revitalization of the city

4 THE THREE-DECKER INITIATIVE

Spotlight the role multi-family dwellings historically have played throughout the region and how these buildings can help meet today's urban housing challenges

5 BREAKTHROUGH COMMUNICATIONS

Amplify Historic New England's voice in the future of preservation, conservation, and community livability, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally

THE RECENTERED SITE EXPERIENCE



Inclusive Stories: Launch our comprehensive initiative to holistically reimagine the site experience – grounding our work in inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility, so that we invite and engage the broadest audience in our study of and discoveries about the region’s past.

Properties Assessment: Reassess and refine the criteria for evaluating our historic site collection for strategic decision-making, and initiate a comprehensive assessment. Update our property acquisition criteria and policy to align with our assessment approach.

Collections: More deeply integrate the social history stories represented by objects in our museums into the recentered site experience. Expand the Eustis Estate “make yourself at home” tactile experience to other properties.

Land Use: Elevate the role of our land in providing welcoming and accessible site experiences, and acknowledge the histories of our landscapes. Create freer, richer experiences for contemporary audiences, with a focus on the next generation and families.

Leveraging Partnerships and the Arts: Encourage and facilitate strong partnerships with arts organizations across our sites – in both the performing and visual arts – to expand audiences, enrich and support community relations, and deepen site connections. Strive for innovative and diverse arts programming that enhances the use of our facilities and landscapes. Leverage the arts to enhance interpretation and storytelling, to help fulfill institutional objectives in diversity, anti-racism, inclusion, equity, and accessibility.

Easement Program Integration: Utilize the Easement Program as an additional resource for expanded stories across the region through the range of privately owned properties protected.

Exhibitions: Reassess and refine the exhibitions program to support our strategic objectives as we reimagine site experience and use.

Land Conservation: Articulate our land conservation strategy and philosophy, including the potential for archaeology to further research on the Indigenous histories of our sites.



Accessibility: Increase physical and remote accessibility by significantly improving the baseline at all sites, and investing in and achieving our highest standard of accessibility at a prioritized selection of sites.

Deferred Maintenance: Develop a deferred maintenance management framework that clearly defines the strategy, priorities, and resource needs to ensure our historic sites are well cared for and represent Historic New England in the best possible light.

Alternative Use Projects: Reassess and refine alternative use plans at Cooper-Frost-Austin House, and Winslow Crocker/Thacher Houses for strategic alignment. Identify and prioritize other alternative use projects to foster collaboration and sustainability. Consider options for sites in tourist areas (Winslow Crocker House, Merwin House, Nickels-Sortwell House).

Deaccession: Through a highly focused analysis and a thorough process, evaluate the properties that have been identified for potential deaccession based on key operational and strategic priorities, and define the path forward.

Site-specific Priorities: Determine future use and action plans for:

- **Hayden Cottage** – Identify service use in support of Beauport operations
- **Bowman House** – Determine site use options that maximize the landscape and partnership opportunities
- **Lyman Estate** – Reassess and refine the marquee property concept and optimize the site’s assets for public engagement and earned income

2 THE OTIS HOUSE REDEVELOPMENT



Vision: Develop a clear and innovative vision for the Otis House complex that maximizes opportunities presented by neighborhood redevelopment plans (West End Branch Library, Hurley Building, Massachusetts General Hospital). Consider multiple site use and access options and partnerships. Simultaneously complete a robust conditions assessment of the buildings. Consider the Boston location as the primary visitor center for the entire Historic New England experience, with strong information and retail presence. Align with the Haverhill facility visioning to strengthen the shared visitor experience of the Boston area sites.



Operations: Develop and implement the action plan for managing the multi-year operational impact at the Otis House complex, from property care work to neighborhood redevelopment, beginning in spring 2021.

Advocacy: Elevate Historic New England's advocacy role by engaging city and community partners, and having a leading voice in the planning and design of changes to the area.

Library and Archives: Identify and evaluate Library and Archives location options based on access, use, and care of the collections, including potential collaboration with the West End Library and expanded use of our Haverhill facility.

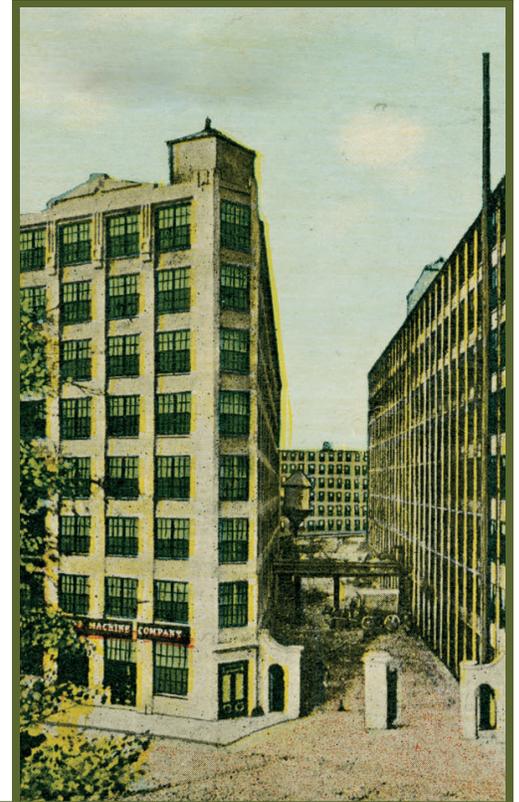


THE HAVERHILL HUB OPPORTUNITY

Opportunities: Optimize the Haverhill facility as a hub of Historic New England activity, and embrace its historic industrial development connection to Boston and the Otis House redevelopment opportunity. Engage community partners and define key performance opportunities of the location. Create a new public environment around the facility and be an agent of change in the city’s revitalization. Use Haverhill’s rich history of innovation as a representative story of manufacturing cities throughout the region.

Plan: Develop and initiate the Haverhill Hub initiative plan that connects with the Otis House initiative and the two cities’ (Haverhill and Boston) different but parallel focus on neighborhood renewal.

Study Collection: Expand innovative access to and use of our study collections for the greatest opportunity to reach broader audiences and be relevant.



4 THE THREE-DECKER INITIATIVE

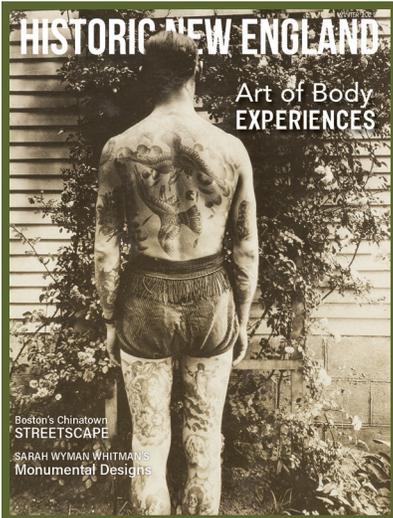


2019 Report: Reassess and refine our focus on three-deckers as an example of New England multi-family housing that has served, past and present, as an entry point to housing and community for new immigrants and emigrants in the region’s cities. Review the staff recommendations in the Three-Decker Initiative Report of March 12, 2019, for viability today.

Plan: Develop and execute a plan that moves forward The Three-Decker Initiative through programs and discourse. Use our New England Summit in 2022, and its forerunner activities, to convene, advance, discuss, shape, and expand the conversation about worker housing, and The New England Plan in its entirety. Consider ties to the Haverhill Hub Opportunity.



BREAKTHROUGH COMMUNICATIONS



Bold Messaging: Refresh the Historic New England brand, and pursue a bold communications strategy – pushing updates of all communications vehicles and strengthening our call to action for membership and engagement. Address the importance and timeliness of historic preservation and community livability in today’s rapidly changing world, and develop bold, crisp, telegraphic messages to spotlight our work. Launch a “your home is here” campaign to encourage shared ownership in Historic New England across all communities. Make telling stories a compelling component of our brand.

Investing in Digital: Continue to invest in an immersive digital media strategy and web-based programs, with daily electronic content, digital events – informational, educational, interactive, and “signature” events – and website updates increasing interactivity and use of video. Massively grow participation across our digital channels through advance marketing of excellent and distinctive digital content and events.

Lifecycle Communications: Build a true lifecycle contact communications effort, from youth and young adults to seniors, to expand membership and remain relevant to all ages and communities across the region. Commit to metrics to measure effectiveness and growth, not just in numbers but also in inclusion, and to guide the continuous improvement of our efforts.

Convene: Become the leading convening entity in the region on historic preservation and sustainability. Establish the annual New England Summit beginning in 2022, and invest in the forerunner events and activities that will fuel engagement and spur momentum, accelerating all aspects of our work from increasing awareness to building membership and diversifying engagement.

Key Support Priorities for THE NEW ENGLAND PLAN

REGIONALITY *Exemplify* the history of cultural diversity in New England by using our assets (properties, collections, programs, expertise) and collaborating with others to preserve and tell the full and inclusive New England story.

PRESERVATION AND ADVOCACY *Leverage* our expertise and professional reputation to proactively address contemporary preservation challenges and ensure the health and livability of New England's communities today and for the future.

EASEMENT PROGRAM *Promote* our nationally recognized program as a highly effective and powerful preservation tool, and use our experience and expertise to elevate best practices in the field.

RESEARCH *Continue* our commitment to research as a cornerstone of broadening our knowledge of New England's diverse history and expanding public engagement.

COLLECTIONS *Look* inclusively at our collections to reveal the diverse stories they can tell about those who lived, worked, and created in the region.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS *Provide* engaging and accessible experiences focused on the full and inclusive New England story through experiential learning.

TECHNOLOGY *Implement* systems and processes that allow efficient and secure business operations for a distributed workforce, facilitate preservation and accessibility of institutional records and digital collections, support decision-making based on real-time access to operational data and key performance indicators, and promote wide access to programming and interpretive content.

GOVERNANCE *Oversee* our success today and ability to build for a sustainable future.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT *Create* a comprehensive and ambitious fundraising program to build philanthropic support, complemented by increased earned income in targeted areas.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS *Create and support* an organizational structure and operation that align with the tenets of our strategic agenda.

Learn more at
HistoricNewEngland.org

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Defining the past. Shaping the future.