

Letter: Vision of industrial development outdated

To the editor:

In the editor's opinion column published on Friday, March 18, the editors of The Daily News threw their support behind industrial development of 102 acres of undeveloped open space. They cite a 40-year-old vision of industrial development as they ask Newburyporters to focus on the city's economic development.

In response, I ask the editors and readers of The Daily News to consider whether it is time to take a hard look at this 40-year-old vision, and whether it in fact serves the economic well-being of this city. Forty years ago were dark times for Newburyport's economy. At that time a vision of industrial development was highly appropriate. However, as that vision bore fruit, and more importantly a bold and original urban renewal effort changed our city profoundly, what is appropriate has evolved - the success of those efforts has created the need to consider new options. We should think hard about the development and preservation of Newburyport. I am enthusiastic about the development proposed for the city's waterfront and at the Route 1 traffic circle. I believe that they will bring the kinds of services and jobs that will serve the city well. I am skeptical that more industrial development will.

I ask the proponents of a 40-year-old industrial development vision to reconsider its merits in light of its and other successes, and to explain clearly to the public why it is superior to the more current visions with which it conflicts. Hopefully there are better reasons than 200 industrial jobs, few of which would be taken by Newburyporters.

We owe genuine gratitude to the urban renewal visionaries and industrial developers who were central to lifting Newburyport from an economic morass. However, we do not owe anyone blind acceptance of an outdated vision. Rather, we owe it to ourselves and future generations of Newburyporters to build a modern, strong and diverse economic base that serves the needs of the future, not the past.

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