

Natick 360



Proceedings of the Key Informants Meeting

February 13, 2007
Morse Institute Library
14 East Central Street
Natick, Massachusetts 07016

Natick 360
 Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



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Key Informants Meeting Overview

At the invitation of the *Natick 360* Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC), 25 “key informants” gathered at the Morse Institute Library in Natick on February 13, 2007. They represented Natick’s neighboring towns, legislators, state agencies, academia and not-for-profit organizations focusing on business, the environment, health care, housing, human services, land use, technology, transportation and urban design.¹ A complete list of the participants begins on page 22, below.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek input from these key informants about:

- The *Natick 360* strategic planning process,
- The consensus value and vision statements that the *Natick 360* process had generated, and
- Resources that these individuals represented, or knew about, that could help Natick achieve its stated vision.

The key informants reviewed each of the consensus value and vision statements generated by the *Natick 360* process. (Those value and vision statements are summarized on page 21, below.)

Small groups of the key informants then focused on one vision statement at a time, noting activities that Natick could undertake and resources that Natick could tap to achieve its vision. (Those observations are recorded verbatim starting on page 4, below. Many of the observations are supplemented by additional research information, primarily website references, in parentheses.)

After all small groups had addressed each vision statement, they wrote three key messages that the groups thought Natick should hear. (Those key messages are summarized on page 2, below.) To close the process, participants were invited to express one phrase, a headline, which would describe the *Natick 360* strategic planning process. (Those headlines are shown on page 3, below.)

Participants also completed a five-item evaluation form. (Verbatim comments from those forms are reported starting on page 12, below.)

Information provided by participants in the Key Informants meeting will be incorporated into Phase III of the strategic planning process, during which time the elected and appointed boards in Natick will work with experts to develop a number of strategic options – different scenarios for establishing policies or programs that could be implemented in each strategic focus area. The various strategic options will be presented in a report “Natick: Our Strategic Options” in June 2007. (For a more complete description of the *Natick 360* strategic planning process see pages 17-20, below.)

¹ Also present were: Natick’s Town Administrator, Deputy Town Administrator and Superintendent of Schools; three SPOC members, David Parish, Craig Ross and John Heerwagen; and two representatives of the local press. Three members of the *Natick 360* project management and facilitation team, [Blackerby Associates, Inc.](#), facilitated the event.

Three Key Messages that Natick Should Hear

During the Key Informants Meeting, small groups of participants were asked to write three key messages that their small group believes Natick officials should hear. The key messages were:

- Develop design standards and guidelines for new development to retain/enhance community character
- Solve existing traffic challenges
- Pursue regional alliances for a sustainable future: environmental, social, economic aspects.
- Solve the downtown parking problem; make sure it enhances modalities – rail/trail – businesses – train station
- Community center downtown; multi-purpose: celebrations, cultural activities, job education, after school activities. Link seniors and youth for cohesiveness.
- Regional agreements and compacts to leverage regional resources, leading to efficiency of government; examples: regional transit authority; combine with educational institutions to enhance job training efforts already underway.
- Build a great 21st century high school: green, flexible, multi-use
- Encourage diversity of housing stock with linkage for other uses: rail trail, public access to lake
- Become a leader in regional planning, sharing of resources and action
- Prize your history and natural resources
- Build off of existing resources: infrastructure, schools, Town Center with a focus on a walkable, bikeable community.
- Think and work regionally: share services, connections, resources.
- Connect Natick through more rail trails
- Destination, day and night
- New high school, a focal point for the community
- Have consistent leadership and constituency-building. Develop local champions. Encourage community involvement.
- Encourage public-private partnerships
- Encourage community to have a more sustainable life: recycling, green belt, pedestrian friendliness, etc.
- Make natural resource conservation a standard practice.
- Encourage diversity through affordable housing and increasing downtown density.
- Do Natick's rules and regulations achieve the vision? Change them if or as necessary.

Headlines About the *Natick 360* Strategic Planning Process

Each participant was invited to share a headline that would describe the *Natick 360* strategic planning process:

- Comprehensive
- Inclusive sustainability
- Regionalization
- Diversity of participants
- Public input
- Sustaining prosperity
- Implementation: vision leads to action
- Implementation is Key: the guide for the future
- Leader in innovative planning process
- Connect the generations
- Natick Rocks!
- Where's Boston?
- NatickAtTheFuture.com!
- Conservation / Leadership / Public Involvement
- Seeking regional solutions
- Thoughtfully designed process
- Sustainability
- Willingness to entertain new ways of going forward
- Thinking better, together
- Need to involve the federal government
- Leadership / Commitment / Will
- The future is coming, whether we plan for it or not!
- Think regionally, act locally
- Celebrating the past and sustaining the future
- Diverse interests for a common future
- Willingness to listen to outsiders
- Broad engagement, but openness to individual innovative ideas
- A user-friendly process

Key Informants' Input to Natick Vision Statements

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which Natick is a healthy community of diverse and interconnected citizens, businesses, organizations and neighborhoods, where citizens of all ages, backgrounds and income levels can live, work and thrive;

- Public infrastructure to support diverse businesses
- Main Streets program, NTHP (National Trust for Historic Preservation; www.mainstreet.org/)
- Connections among neighborhoods: bike trails, walking, etc.
- Community ephemera celebrations, ritual
- Civic engagement via website, events, etc.
- Non-English speakers; how are they engaged?
- Land bank
- New transportation and program options for teens
- Address walk-ability and other health concerns
- Start “walk to school” programs at each school
 - MetroWest Health grants funding?
 - Enforce sidewalk requirement on developers
 - Plan pedestrian-oriented development (see www.epa.gov/piedpage/pdf/ptfd_primer.pdf)
 - Put sidewalks on main streets that don't have them
- Design standards for street improvements
- Preserve community character in new development; historic district?
- More mixed-use / pedestrian-oriented development? 40R
- Community gardens
- CPA approval and strategic use (Community Preservation Act; <http://commpres.env.state.ma.us>)
- Continue to build affordable housing
- Expand use of 40R
- Consider an affordable housing trust fund
- Celebrate cultural diversity – opportunity for Natick Center?
- Celebrate manufacturing / RR and other histories
- Explore public / private partnerships to help fund community programs
- Revisit age-restricted housing; assisted living
- Workforce development
 - Employers to generate internships
 - Improve Keefe Tech
 - Build school/business partnerships: Boston Scientific; Natick Labs
 - Work with Framingham State (www.framingham.edu), MBCC (MassBay Community College, www.massbay.edu)
- Senior Center
- Community / senior center / YMCA to connect citizens together, especially with aging population
- Youth in high school / elderly exchange
- Celebrate sub-community / neighborhood character
- Sponsor more health promotion / screening programs
- Safe walking routes to school
- Indoor / outdoor air quality / asthma prevention

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which Natick's natural resources are preserved and accessible to the community;

- Check out status of land adjacent to and north of Speen Street National Guard Armory.
- Chapter 40B has new guideline, re: smart growth
 - Is this something to consider, re: 40B projects being developed in South Natick
 - Open space residential design—cluster—by law
- Agricultural preservation restrictions
- Review local building requirements for low-impact design; for example: permeable surfacing; storm water BMP's (best management practices), such as rain gardens and swales; native species landscaping
- Coordinated water treatment planning
- Solve invasive aquatic plants
- Revisit Community Preservation Act (see www.communitypreservation.org/, Community Preservation Coalition)
- 40R district?
- Adopt low impact development techniques
- Improved access, handicap accessible, to Charles River
- Alternative funding for conservation acquisitions: grants
- Formation of non-profit Land Trust
- Support continued rail-trail activities (seconded by another group); can it be linked to South Middlesex Trail and other trails?
- Identification of walking trails
- Transfer of development rights (TDR) option
- Increase variety of public access to lake
- Build on partnerships with existing non-profits (Mass Audubon: www.massaudubon.org/; Sudbury Valley Trustees: www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org/)
- Open space money for trail development, signage, maintenance, etc.
- Better / more access to lake
- Linkage fees from developers for opens space preservation, acquisition and maintenance
- Lake Cochituate:
 - More action on milfoil weed
 - Strengthen DCR (Department of Conservation & Recreation, www.mass.gov/dcr/) relationship
 - Build sustainable activities at Lake; more kayaks and canoes
- Work more with environmental non-profits
 - Sudbury Valley Trustees (www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org/)
 - SuAsCo Watershed Community Council (Sudbury-Assabet-Concord, www.suasco.org/)
 - Subboz (?) River Watershed Org
 - Charles River Watershed Association (www.crwa.org/)
- Ensure Open Space Plan is current
- Affirm importance of Water Conservation and education on environmental issues such as storm water

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which Natick Center is the vibrant core of the community, a unique and accessible destination for commerce, community and culture, day and night;

- More night-time activities:
 - Restaurants
 - Cultural attractions
- Mixed uses: housing and retail
- Rail trail
- Bike racks
- Accessibility:
 - Any alternative to private cars?
 - Electric circulators?
 - Mini busses?
- Increase housing and mixed use density in Center
- Allow entertainment in restaurants
- Emphasize unique character of architecture / history
- Allow accessory (housing) units
- Design standards / guidelines for development
- Emphasize Town core within deciding upon municipal investments
- Access D.T. (downtown) revitalization grants (extensive list of resource links is at www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/downtown.html; federally-funded, State-administered community development block grants www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/stateadmin/index.cfm; Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development is the state administrator of CDBG funds, at www.mass.gov/dhcd/components/cs/1PrgApps/CDBG/default.HTM)
- Parking strategy
- Appropriate storefront designs to create “district” feel
- Pedestrian-oriented design (see U.S. Environmental Protection Agency primer, at www.epa.gov/piedpage/pdf/ptfd_primer.pdf published by American Planning Association)
 - Landscaping
 - Way-finding
 - Furnishings
 - Connectivity to other destinations, corridors
- Green as much construction as possible
- Create community-ride program to develop design guidelines with professional guide
- Historic district / building designation / identification?
- Arts Council
- Fairs
- Late-night shopping
- Local talent: music, arts, dance, literature, photography
- Solve 400 car deficit
- State Transit Oriented Development grants for parking; up to \$500,000 for parking;
 - Reference Plymouth; Tad Read (617-573-1392, Tad.Read@state.ma.us), at MBTA Office of Commonwealth Development knows about this; (see www.mass.gov/TOD; see Mr. Read’s presentation at www.mass.gov/envir/pdfs/sgconf_C5_read.pdf; see MBTA Capital Investment Program at www.mbta.com/uploadedFiles/documents/CIP_7_11_DRAFT_11_18_05.pdf; parking projects are described on page 109)

- See Turnpike for grants to abutting cities and towns; parking might be included; Steve Jacques is contact (Director of Business Development, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, 617-248-2835, Steve.Jacques@masspike.com, www.massturnpike.com).
- 18-hour place
 - Draw together and promote arts and cultural activities
 - Seek to enhance downtown as core, including parking and business development (expansion of food and night dining services downtown)
- Emphasize core services in Natick Center, to make the Center a desirable residential area, especially for seniors:
 - Health care
 - Assisted living / life care facilities

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which Natick's public schools and programs are recognized as among the best;

- Advocate for adequate and stable state funding!
- Intergenerational learning opportunities; e.g., seniors, K-3rd grade
- Link for-profit companies with student learning; especially high-wage jobs, e.g., e-technology
- Adult education as a community-builder could be strengthened in Natick
- Build alliances with regional higher educational facilities: Framingham State College (www.framingham.edu/); MassBay Community College (www.massbay.edu/)
- Foster climate of innovation in the public schools
- Build or renovate new high school
- Charter schools: regional charter school in Framingham
- Problem of lower state reimbursements for public schools
- Green schools can help attain higher priorities: MA ECIP Program (Energy Conservation Improvement Program, US Department of Energy funding to states, see http://eere.energy.gov/state_energy_program/grants_by_state_archive.cfm/year=2001/state=MA, and www.mass.gov/doer/)
- Charter school financing for construction is available
- Involve kids in Town, not just school
- More integration between businesses, community and schools; mentoring
- Affordable housing for teachers
- Child care for teachers
- Continue focus on 21st century jobs: college; vocational training for the 21st century
- Work on “path to school” issues
- Participate in “safe routes to school” program through Executive Office of Transportation (www.commute.com/default.asp?pgid=massrides/srsMain&sid=MRlevel2)
- Elevate respect for teaching profession; one idea is to increase pay
- More business involvement in schools; internships, career days, \$\$
- Student / elder oral history project
- Local history units
- Student / elder joint projects
- Ender-led study / tutor groups; community resource
- Longer school day
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, <http://umassk12.net/stem/>)
- Encourage / promote / require green development / rehab; emphasize high performing buildings; incorporate into curriculum
- Encourage civic involvement
- Encourage multi-functional buildings, both in scheduling and as design issue.

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which Natick's self-government, supported by informed and engaged citizens, is fiscally sound, delivers services efficiently and communicates effectively with the public;

- Right new Town Manager
- Expanded use of 21st century technology
- On-line government services / permitting
- Downtown WiFi
- Focus on, and evaluate for, outcomes
- Internships in Natick's government
- Youth 360 visioning session
- Encourage youth: high school program on civic engagement
- Encourage collaboration between "Town side" and "school side"
- Better integrate / improve community service requirement for schools
- More local aid
- Benchmarks
- Town blog / other communications technologies
- Larger Town/City models
- More regionalization of services
 - Transportation
 - Joint procurement
 - Trainings
- Open meetings / open house / neighborhood meetings, re: municipal activity, etc.
- 10-year capital plan
- TOD (Transit Oriented Development) bond funds / package (see Reconnecting America, at www.reconnectingamerica.org/html/TOD/)
- PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) as a path to / rehearsal for larger leadership roles
- Continue development of new leaders through training, technical assistance and links with education (high school)
- Insure access to state, federal and regional funding resources
- Engage Precinct One in Town Meeting
- Encourage local businesses: flyers, newspaper
- Web site presence
- Community access TV?
- Non-English materials?
- Coffee hour presentations to elders, church groups, PTA's
- Alternative: roundtable discussions sponsored by different boards (conservation, planning)
- Leadership MetroWest training
- Awards to businesses that support "smart growth" initiatives
- Recognize civic engagement
- Employ locally
- Join MetroWest RTA (Regional Transportation Authority, see www.eot.state.ma.us/rtas/rtaMap.asp?mde=info)

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which Natick's public infrastructure and buildings fulfill their function efficiently and effectively to the satisfaction of the community, and are maintained in good working order;

- Trained maintenance staff can be shared: Town facilities; schools, Council of Aging, any public building; etc.
- Consider new financing structures for infrastructure coming along; look at the School Building Assistance Corp. model
- See road/highway financing through innovative measures
- Use public facilities for multiple purposes (seconded by another group)
 - Senior center
 - Food pantry
 - See Ashland Community Center
- Natick needs new senior center; make it a community center
- Plan and prioritize capital maintenance needs
- Annual basis, update capital needs analysis
- Life cycle costing; energy efficiency; green rehabilitation
- Access state resources / grants
- Investigate MA green school activities for new high school
- Senior Center / Community Center needed (combined)
- Budget in preventative maintenance costs; life cycle costs
- Multi-use of public buildings (e.g., use of schools at night)
- Public / private partnerships; shared space
- More green projects, with state funding
- Replace high school
- Carbon neutrality
- Shared space in churches, Y's, and other private buildings
- Partner with local financial businesses to identify new and creative funding sources
- Use green design; seek LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, U.S. Green Building Council; www.usgbc.org/)
- Water conservation measures, including separate metering
- Work with EOT (Executive Office of Transportation; www.eot.state.ma.us/) and MHD (Massachusetts Highway Department; www.mhd.state.ma.us/) on road maintenance
- Adopt sustainability standards for new construction / rehabilitation
- Storm water management initiatives
- Create opportunities for higher density development in core / near transit
- Develop partnerships with local businesses for maintenance of parks / roads / public features

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which Natick is a desirable and accessible destination that marshals local and regional partners and resources to solve problems and enhance the quality of life for all its citizens.

- Consider volume of traffic on Route 9, and the wisdom of widening the Turnpike.
- Ensure viability of Leonard Morse Hospital (www.mwmc.com/).
- Become a leader in initiating serious regional problem-solving with immediate neighbors, watersheds, natural ecological areas and larger region
- Utilities joint purchasing
- Oak Street / Route 9 interchange needs federal funding
- West Natick parking garage (rail station) needs state or federal funding
 - Look at TOD (Transit Oriented Development) opportunities (see Center for Transit Oriented Development at www.reconnectingamerica.org/html/TOD/)
- Establish MetroWest RTA (Regional Transportation Authority; see Massachusetts Association of Regional Transportation Authorities at www.matransit.com/, and Executive Office of Transportation RTA map at www.eot.state.ma.us/rta/rtaMap.asp?mde=info)
- Parking garage: funding: off-street parking program (Executive Office for Administration & Finance at www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoafofhomepage&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eeoaf, Commonwealth Capital Investment Plan, www.mass.gov/bb/fy2007h1/2007frames/capital-body.shtml)
- Rail Trail:
 - EOT (Executive Office of Transportation, www.eot.state.ma.us/) bike and pedestrian coordinator (www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=../common/BikeIndex&sid=level2)
 - Transportation enhancement funds
 - DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) – trails program (www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/regionalGrants.htm)
 - Rail Trail Caucus (State Legislature; Sen. Pam Resor, Chair, Pamela.Resor@state.ma.us, www.mass.gov/legis/member/ppr0.htm)
 - Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO, see www.bostonmpo.org/)
 - Massachusetts highway new design manual (www.vhb.com/mhdGuide/mhd_GuideBook.asp)
- Bring jobs and housing together
- Reinforce Natick Center as regional destination for cultural activities
- South Natick as destination: emphasize historic features, interpretive walks, etc.
- Enhance pedestrian experience
 - Remember the disabled
- Regionalization of government / public services
- Promote mixed-use development
- Defend and enhance Natick Trail System
- Maximize potential of people working / living in region
- Consider joining new RTA being developed for the region
- MAPC has Metro Future; see how Natick 360 can leverage Metro Future (www.metrofuture.org/)

Key Informants Meeting Evaluations

Each participant completed a five-item evaluation form at the end of the meeting. The numbers are each associated with a specific participant's response. Skipped numbers indicate a skipped response.

Your comments about the Natick 360 process: What are its best points? What should we change?

1. Hearing the process will in the future include dollar estimates of the proposals is a positive. Also, that results will be confirmed with a more random selection of residents.
2. The around-the-room exercise to evaluate the goals was time well-spent; hopefully this input will be utilized fully.
3. Cross section of participants: high level, informed and fully engaged.
4. Community involvement from many aspects, leads to interdisciplinary brainstorming.
5. The breakout sessions. Shorter introduction.
6. Comprehensive process; good citizen input; good engagement of Town boards.
7. Best point: leadership development. Engage not-traditional actors (outside Town Meeting)
8. Great model for other towns. Potential to tie into MetroFuture effort?
9. Specifically sought input from "outsiders" to the community via this session. Seek consensus and specific actions instead of general vision.
10. Good citizen involvement. I also liked the fact that you included outsiders.
11. Professional background of participants; there is a list of invitees, but obviously they weren't all here. It would have been nice to know if you were intending to host other "key participant" sessions.
12. Best aspect was brainstorming breakout sessions. Would be good to see better summary of how this meeting fits into overall process. Best points of process are input from diverse range of participants.
13. Overall strategic planning happening at a community scale. Seems like you have a very decent approach and execution; no change suggestions.
14. Need to have decision-makers from state agencies actually available to offer solutions.
15. I was only present for the second half of the meeting. The revolving brainstorming was well-organized, and gave everyone plenty of opportunity to express themselves.
17. Fabulous. Very impressed with the level of thought and research that went into shaping the process. Best: communication, outreach, private sector involvement. Changes:
18. The diversity of groups represented.
19. Good background. Need to put Natick in larger MetroWest / metropolitan context. Strengths and weaknesses.
20. Good basic process. Nice to consult wide range of people. Good numbers for engagement. Value & vision statements & future, however, seem too similar to me. Natick won't stay the same. Might be key to push people harder to see gaps and issues to work on.
21. Comprehensive.
22. Steps to implementation exercise.
23. Terrific process as described. Key to success will be ability to change local ordinances / bylaws / policies to enable that vision.
24. Great process! Good involvement from diverse sectors of community.
25. Very thoughtful, thorough, lots of opportunities for input.
26. It is essential that the effort be translated into an action plan; to truly inform and guide financial, development and other policies and decisions.
27. Excellent process. The danger is that issues and goals get too generalized.

Your comments Key Informants Meeting: What went well? What would you change next time?

1. Thought it was a good first step to let people know what town is thinking and let state sources start to think about ways to assist.
2. Can you provide us all with a list of participants? And notes on the outcome of today? Your last bullet is two thoughts in one; it should be broken out as two thoughts or just move the “desirable and accessible destination” to the first bullet; it really doesn’t fit as written.
3. Send out some preliminary information on Town; perhaps PowerPoint presentation to reduce introduction time. Give questions to bring out input.
4. Group brainstorming: encourage more diverse groups for brainstorming; encourage specific rather than broad suggestions
5. Breakout sessions were very informative; not enough time on these.
6. Small group brainstorming was efficient way to identify issues.
7. Timing was very good; punctual, etc.
8. Initial presentations were a bit too long. MAPC data was helpful. Should intentionally mix a Natick resident into each small group to answer specific questions, as they relate to brainstorm of solutions.
9. All seemed to go well.
10. I liked the way you got input by having 7 stations and rotating, with follow-up. Worked well.
11. Introduction of Natick issues. Perhaps more consciously team disciplines.
12. Again, breakout sessions were extremely thoughtful and useful; perhaps allow a little bit more time to get to know one another, to understand different perspectives.
13. Went well. Open format. Round “table” circle; engagement of attendees. Distribution of PowerPoint materials in advance?
14. Need to have a few more people who know the Town mixed in. Groups were a little too abstract.
15. See above. This is the only part of the process I have knowledge of.
16. Very good to take advantage of knowledge base of participants to solicit potential solutions.
17. Very well organized and informative. Just wish that I had more / better ideas to contribute, but the citizens of Natick beat me to them!
18. The group participation; great ideas and specifics.
19. Excellent overall.
20. Good session. Nice to consult “outsiders.” Facilitators and local folks created good atmospheres. One small issue was small groups tended to dampen ability to suggest dramatic new ideas. Perhaps some time for individuals to give feedback unconstrained by feeling that “we should look for consensus.”
21. Well organized. Include private sector in discussion.
23. Nice combinations of presenter and group process. Worked quite well. Maybe 1-2 fewer rotations, as most of ideas already on the table by your 6th station.
24. Good small group process.
25. Good, efficient use of time; lots of brainstorming; lots of ideas generated.
26. I thought the format from this morning’s event was very successful.
27. Group is too heavy with planning and government bureaucrats; not enough Natick residents; creates bias toward regionalism.

What role can you or your organization play in the Natick 360 process in the near future?

1. Would love to be informed of the results to see what opportunities we may be able to assist with as ideas become more concrete.
2. When it comes to regional collaboration, we welcome Natick's involvement in the Council; regional collaboration on environmental resource issues is what the Council is all about.
3. Provide information / financing for affordable housing, community development.
4. CRWA can work to encourage redevelopment with LID, storm water BMP's and planning to keep water local and protection of the water quality of the Charles River.
5. Funding for farmland preservation. Curriculum information for agriculture in the classroom.
6. Health data, analysis of health issues; potential funder of those issues; items that relate to health.
7. Can participate as needed. Outreach is a priority the EOTC, and many of these themes can be translated state-wide.
8. Happy to help identify state resources. Would really like to sit down with members of oversight committee to get recommendations on how to address implementation barriers found in state policy.
9. Assist with visioning. Funding source for parks, water/sewer infrastructure, etc.
10. Will continue to be involved in affordable housing advocacy.
11. MassHousing could be helpful in presenting housing finance options. The Boston Society of Architects could discuss design standards for new development.
12. Planning of mixed-use, mixed-income developments; transportation-oriented; housing collaborations.
13. Organization. MTC can help with green schools, green affordable housing; renewable energy for municipal and citizens.
15. Sudbury Valley Trustees would be happy to assist with land conservation that protects wildlife habitat and ecological integrity, should opportunities arise.
16. Technical assistance in developing bylaws to implement the plan. Joint purchasing program to build cooperation with adjacent communities and save costs. Continuing data & mapping assistance.
17. Federal agencies. Public health community?
19. Research / policy analysis.
20. Not much in my particular case.
22. Legislative support to any local bills which arise; support in seeking grants.
23. Resource person.
24. MetroWest Chamber will continue to support the ongoing process.
25. Can contribute to refinement of ideas on open space preservation.
26. Well, I hope I am a key participant in its implementation.
27. Cover it in news and opinion pages.

Who else—people or organizations not here today—should be involved in the Natick 360 process?

1. The residents of Natick; as many as possible.
2. Sudbury River Watershed Organization: contact Freddie Gillespie at 508-481-8499. Has Charles River Watershed Association been invited? How about MetroWest Growth Management Committee? Also, the MetroWest Leadership Academy is a good source of your leaders.
3. Mall owners, business leaders, land owners, MBTA, Youth, abutting towns: Framingham, Wellesley, etc.; re: regionalization.
4. Diverse citizen involvement; specially youth and elderly, to take active role in community development and leadership.
5. Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Trustees of the Reservations.
6. Involve youth population of Natick.
7. See point #1. Framingham officials and residents (border / Town line) as well as W towns; Natick has more in common with Framingham.
8. Broader list already provided to David Parish.
9. MBTA, neighboring towns.
10. Pretty good cross-section. State natural resources people, like DCR, should have been there.
11. NAHB, NAIOP, ALSA.
13. Churches, organizations of faith (just noticed they were missing and a significant part in some folks life). Arts / cultural representatives. Federal representatives. Private schools. Abutter communities representatives (the W's, Framingham).
14. Actual decision-makers from state agencies. Federal agency decision-makers.
15. I'm not clear enough on who is here to respond. Certainly transportation people ought to be involved, but I've no doubt you realize that. Massachusetts historical people?
16. Additional participation by legislative delegation to inform them of needs, such as legislative changes (a) to allow communities to require development impact fees and (b) allow towns working on affordable housing (e.g., 40R districts) relief from 40B.
17. Implementation: zoning, regulations and financing. Ultimately need to reflect the vision. Think big and think boldly. Make no small plans!
19. MetroWest Growth Management Committee; legislators; state agencies.
20. I was struck by fact that today there was essentially only one person of color in the room. How are the full range (younger, older, people of color, poor, rich, work but don't live, institutional leaders) involved?
21. Private sector: banks, real estate, accounting professionals.
23. Given focus in vision on diversity, our group did not seem reflective of all community interests (equity, for example).
25. Wellesley College; Natick is, and could be more, destination for college students.
26. I'd need to know more to comment accurately, but I think I see a need for the sponsoring boards to be more participatory.
27. Like to see more youth involvement.

What additional steps should we take to ensure success of the Natick 360 process?

1. Follow-up meetings to discuss process and progress.
2. It will be challenging, but you really need to involve the general public so that they feel ownership of this process and commitment to achieving the vision.
3. Accurately cost out possibilities.
4. Encourage key informant comments on specific plans. Specific points for change, not just broad ideas, and specific suggestions / resources.
5. Maybe a workgroup that continues to keep things moving forward by energizing and re-visiting the vision from time-to-time.
6. Keep up the great work. Continue efforts to keep residents informed throughout the process.
7. More diverse business support (leverage state / federal government to secure this).
8. Make a big public deal of outcomes. Apply for state or EPA smart growth award.
9. Make sure to change the rules to realize the vision.
11. Email participants when there are updates on the website; embed the link in the email.
12. Continue to build on the response today. Keep people informed of the process and how this session (and follow-up) fits into overall goal.
15. Big abstract buzz words don't really get us very far; everyone favors them
16. Invite participation of same group of Key Regional Informants to make comments on Phase 4 Implementation Steps, to provide final comments and suggestions.
18. Do you have a website, or at least a link on the Town's website so others can see what good things are happening?
19. Keep it focused on what can be done. Refresh it at least every two years.
20. Look at likely emerging technology changes. Look for some great creative forward-looking individuals, as well as your great efforts to speak with groups.
21. Invite local businesses and nonprofits to introduce their plans for the future. Educational session on state programs, resources of interest identified.
23. Thinking creatively on how to fund long term, work with other municipalities in region, and tackle policy barriers. (does local zoning allow the kind of community people want to see?)
24. Continue to get the word out. Great use of website to get people involved. Very user friendly.
25. No suggestions; it seems very well designed, with lots of opportunities for public input and buy-in (very important).
26. Be sure the sponsoring boards are really buying into the process. Be sure to produce affordable, measurable outcomes that may be implemented.

***Natick 360* Strategic Planning Process**

Natick, along with many other communities in the region, faces serious challenges regarding growth, development and finance. The future will continue to bring new proposals for growth and development, and Natick will face difficult decisions about the types and level of municipal services offered under tightening financial constraints.

Developing a long-range strategic plan through broad participation of community members, and under the authority of elected and appointed boards, will help Natick prioritize investment of limited resources in the context of a long-range vision for the town. It will also help increase civic participation in Natick's local government, and identify outside funding sources to leverage tax dollars.

Natick 360 is the Town of Natick's long-range strategic planning process. It is sponsored by, and run under the authority of, the town's Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Finance Committee, Conservation Commission and School Committee. In April 2006, Town Meeting appropriated funds to implement the *Natick 360* process, and generous corporate sponsors² have supplemented these appropriations.

Five major benefits accrue to the Town of Natick through this planning process. The *Natick 360* strategic planning process will:

- Assemble a rich source of information about the town's history and current condition;
- Identify what residents value in the community and their hopes for the future;
- Provide information to help boards set priorities and advance collaboration, identifying areas for shared resources and complementary efforts;
- Promote Natick as a desirable community for investment and identify areas of leverage to attract additional resources (businesses, investors, outside funding); and
- Increase public participation and develop a pool of future civic leaders.

The *Natick 360* strategic planning process will be developed over 16 months. The final document, including specific actions and estimated costs, will be submitted for approval at Fall Town Meeting in October 2007. The sponsoring boards may call for a committee to be formed to review progress against the *Strategic Plan* halfway through the projected five-year implementation period.

The *Natick 360* planning process is managed by a Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC). The nine members of the oversight committee are made up of one designee from each of the sponsoring boards and four members of the community-at-large.³

The SPOC manages the planning process, recommends and oversees the work of professional consultants on the project, engages the public to participate in the process and coordinates involvement by the sponsoring boards. SPOC is a facilitation committee; final authority for all outcomes of the process rests with the sponsoring boards and with Town Meeting.

² As of publication of this document, corporate sponsors for *Natick 360* are Middlesex Savings Bank, Natick Federal Savings Bank, Eastern Bank, WebReply, Inc., MetroWest Subaru and Belkin Lookout Farm.

³ Rosemary Driscoll, designee of the Natick School Committee; Terri Evans, community-at-large; Matthew Gardner, designee of the Conservation Commission; John Heerwagen, community-at-large; David Parish, Co-Chair, designee of the Board of Selectmen; George Richards, designee of the Planning Board; Craig Ross, Co-Chair, designee of the Finance Committee; Harlee Strauss, community-at-large; Fred Witte, community-at-large, resigned upon becoming the Town of Natick Controller, creating a vacancy.

Natick 360 Phases

The *Natick 360* planning process has four phases:

- Phase I – Our Community Yesterday and Today
- Phase II – Our Shared Vision for the Future
- Phase III – Our Strategic Options
- Phase IV – Our Strategic Choices

Phase I (June-September 2006) produced a report that describes Natick’s history and the current conditions in the community. This report describes the baseline conditions in Natick that should be recognized in planning for the future.

Phase II (October-December of 2006) focuses on current attitudes and future hopes: developing a set of shared visions and values for the Natick community. The cornerstone of the visioning process was the “Vision for the Future Weekend” on October 27-29, 2006. During the weekend, members of the public met with skilled facilitators to discuss current community values and hopes for the future. This information, and information drawn from focus groups, on-going surveys, community meetings and meeting with the sponsoring board and committees, has been consolidated in this Values and Vision report.

During Phase III, the elected and appointed boards in Natick will work with experts to develop a number of strategic options – different scenarios for establishing policies or programs that could be implemented in each strategic focus area. The various strategic options will be presented in a report “Natick: Our Strategic Options” in May 2007.

Finally, in Phase IV, the public will be invited to prioritize the various strategic options that will shape Natick’s future. The results of these community meetings will be tested by a scientific sample survey of the community at large.

The final Strategic Plan will be created by the sponsoring boards, after consideration of the results of the Phase IV priorities and the scientific sample survey. The final strategic plan report will be submitted for approval by Town Meeting in the fall of 2007.

Introduction to Natick’s Vision for the Future

Some communities allow the future to happen to them. Successful communities recognize the future is something they can create. These communities take the time to produce a vision of the future they desire and employ a process that helps them achieve their goals.

The Community Vision and Strategic Planning Handbook
National Civic League, 2000

Good strategic plans are built upon a clear understanding of the desired end goals. Phase II of *Natick 360* produced a community-wide vision for the future of Natick.

To gather information from the public to create Natick’s vision for the future, *Natick 360* conducted a “Vision for the Future Weekend⁴” event, October 27-29, 2006, at Wilson Middle School. A total of 327 citizens participated during the weekend event, speaking to facilitators about what they value about Natick and their hopes and dreams for the future of the community.

In addition, *Natick 360* offered a series of surveys to businesses, community organizations and citizens, both in paper form and on-line at the *Natick 360* website (www.natick360.org). More than 200 survey responses were received. In total, more than 500 residents participated in creating set of value and vision statements that follow.

Community input was consolidated by the strategic planning consultants into a series of categorized lists. The sponsoring boards for *Natick 360*, and a group of volunteers from the public, reviewed the consolidated public input and identified area of consensus. The results of these work sessions were then further consolidated into the consensus vision and value statements shown below.

Although distinctions between value and vision may be subtle, the *Natick 360* process defines a *value* as a current attribute of Natick that people treasure and hope to preserve. A *vision* is a hoped-for future attribute of Natick that may or may not exist today.

Value and vision statements are the foundation of the strategic planning effort. They provide a stable point of reference and a test for future actions. They may appear unrealistic or contradictory; however, we are often guided by goals that may initially appear unachievable. If a family dreams of sending its children to college without a clear understanding of how they will afford the expense, their hopes and dreams for their children are still valid.

Value and vision statements do not prescribe specific actions; instead, they describe outcomes which may result from actions taken. The next phase of the planning process, Phase 3, *Our Strategic Options* will outline a series of actions that Natick might take to address its vision for the future.

The actions proposed in Phase 3 need not be the responsibility of town government alone, nor do they need to be achieved all at the same time. By communicating a clear vision, Natick may attract

⁴ Sponsors of the Vision for the Future Weekend included the *Natick 360* sponsors (Middlesex Savings Bank, Natick Federal Savings Bank, Eastern Bank, WebReply, Inc., MetroWest Subaru and Belkin Lookout Farm) and additional support from Middlesex Savings Bank, Fair & Yeager Insurance Company, The Frame Shop and Gallery, The Center for Arts in Natick (TCAN), The Walnut Hill School, Starbucks Coffee, Roche Brothers, Stop and Shop, BJ’s Wholesale Club, and Entenmann’s Outlet Store.

outside resources that share in the common vision for the future. Phase 4 of the Natick strategic planning process will allow for priority-setting and phased implementation of desired actions.

The value and vision statements shown below are in random order; no priority ranking is intended. Repeated key words reflect ideas that overlap multiple value or vision statements; repetition does not denote relative importance. Some statements have few words while others are more verbose; the volume of material does not indicate their relative importance.

Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.

Natick Value and Vision Statements⁵



As citizens of Natick, we value:

- Natick’s “small-town” sense as a safe, interconnected community fed by its heritage, pride and spirit of volunteerism, and by its diversity, derived from its tradition of affordability and welcoming nature;
- Natick’s stewardship of its diverse open spaces, and natural resources;
- A high-value education for students at all levels and abilities, and continuing educational opportunities for all Natick citizens;
- A variety of businesses that create a wide range of jobs and provide support to the community in many ways;
- Natick Center, a vibrant focal point of our community;
- Natick’s abundance of cultural, recreational and educational facilities, wide array of municipal services, and proximity to major transit and transportation resources that contribute to our high quality of life.

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which:

- Natick is a healthy community of diverse and interconnected citizens, businesses, organizations and neighborhoods, where citizens of all ages, backgrounds and income levels can live, work and thrive;
- Natick’s natural resources are preserved and accessible to the community;
- Natick Center is the vibrant core of the community, a unique and accessible destination for commerce, community and culture, day and night;
- Natick’s public schools and programs are recognized as among the best;
- Natick’s self-government, supported by informed and engaged citizens, is fiscally sound, delivers services efficiently and communicates effectively with the public;
- Natick’s public infrastructure and buildings fulfill their function efficiently and effectively to the satisfaction of the community, and are maintained in good working order;
- Natick is a desirable and accessible destination that marshals local and regional partners and resources to solve problems and enhance the quality of life for all its citizens.

⁵ Note: Value and Vision Statements are in random order. No prioritization is implied.

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