

Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Vision for the Future Weekend Summary of Participant Evaluations

Introduction

The Town of Natick hosted a Vision for the Future Weekend, October 27-29, 2006, at Wilson Middle School, to kick-off the year-long Natick 360 strategic planning process. Key elements of the weekend included:

Kickoff Event

The Friday evening event started with welcomes to participants by Craig Ross, Natick 360 Co-Chair, Charles Hughes, Natick Board of Selectmen Chair, and State Representative David Linsky. Project manager Phillip Blackerby described the Natick 360 process. Joel Barrera, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, highlighted facts about Natick life today, from the *Natick: Our Community Yesterday and Today* report. David Parish, Natick 360 Co-Chair, introduced the keynote speaker, Anthony Flint of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, journalist and author of *This Land: The Battle over Sprawl and the Future of America*. Mr. Flint spoke about smart growth, New Urbanism, green building, property rights and forces that propagate sprawl. Over 150 citizens attended the event.

Participants were asked to complete a brief evaluation form; a summary of these evaluations is below.

Vision and Values Workshops

Over 325 Natick citizens invested two hours of their valuable weekend time participating in 20 facilitated workshops in six time periods Saturday and Sunday. Each workshop had 10-18 participants. They divided into smaller groups of 3-5 to brainstorm their values for Natick:

- What would you like to preserve here in Natick?
- What are the community's values that are so important to you in Natick that you would not want to lose?
- What do you value the most about living in Natick?

The small groups shared their ideas with their larger workshop group, keeping notes of their discussion on easel pads. Participants then broke into smaller groups again to brainstorm their vision of Natick's future:

- If you had one wish for the future of Natick, what would it be?
- Twenty years from now, what will an ideal Natick look like to you?
- What will Natick look like when your children choose a place to live?

Natick 360

The Natick 360 strategic planning process is a citizen-driven approach to developing a long-range plan for the Town of Natick. The Natick 360 process is organized into four phases:

1. *Our Community Yesterday and Today* report by MAPC.
2. *Our Shared Vision for the Future*, with community workshops, Oct. 27-29, 2006, and writing Vision & Values statements for the Town.
3. *Our Strategic Options*, organized around focus areas and alternative scenarios, with policies, programs and projects, and associated costs.
4. *Our Strategic Choices*, with community workshops, May 18-20, 2007 and a scientific sample survey in June 2007.

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee directs the process: Craig Ross and David Parish, Co-Chairs, Rosemary Driscoll, Terri Evans, John Heerwagen, Matthew Gardner, George Richards, Harlee Strauss and Fred Witte. Blackerby Associates, an independent consultancy, manages and facilitates the project.

The small groups shared their vision ideas with the larger workshop group, keeping notes on easel pads. Near the end of the session, all concurrent workshop participants came together to share their values and visions across workshops. Participants could also contribute to a Town timeline, place a star representing their home on a map of Natick, and sign a print depicting downtown Natick.

Participants were also urged to complete a brief evaluation form. A summary of the participants' evaluations follows.

Kick-Off Event Evaluations

After the Friday kick-off event, 36 participants returned evaluation forms. The forms contained five items, with places to rate each item on a five-point scale. The scale for the first four items was "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Uncertain," "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." For the fifth item, the five-point scale was from "Highly Effective" to "Not Effective." The form also provided space for comments for each item. A summary of the responses follows.

Responses to Friday Evening Kick-Off Event Evaluation Forms

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
1. The meeting purposes were achieved	17 47%	17 47%	2 6%	0 0%	0 0%	36 100%
2. The meeting helped me become more aware of the Natick 360 strategic planning process	21 58%	15 42%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	36 100%
3. This meeting helped me learn more about how Natick is today.	18 50%	12 33%	5 14%	3 8%	0 0%	36 100%
4. This meeting helped me learn more about "smart growth" trends.	19 53%	14 39%	3 8%	0 0%	0 0%	36 100%
Item	Highly Effective				Not Effective	Total Responses
5. My rating and comments on the meeting overall:	26 74%	9 26%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	35 100%

Many private sector business measure customer satisfaction in a similar way. Three measures are key:

- *Customer satisfaction rate:* The sum of the top two responses, "Strongly Agree" and "Agree," or "Highly Effective" and the next highest level of effectiveness. In this case, customer satisfaction ranges from 83% (item 3) to 100% (item 5). Any satisfaction measure above about 65% is considered good, so participants were generally very satisfied with the kick-off event.
- *Customer dissatisfaction rate:* The sum of the bottom two responses, "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree," or "Not Effective" and the next highest level of effectiveness. In the responses summarized above, customer dissatisfaction ranges from 0% (items 1, 2, 4 and 5) to 3% (item 3). Most businesses strive to keep customer dissatisfaction as low as possible; a dissatisfaction score

of 10% generally indicates a serious problem. Participants generally were not dissatisfied with the kick-off event. Even item 3, with a 3% dissatisfaction rate, does not indicate a problem.

- *Excellence rate:* The top rating, “Strongly Agree” or “Highly Effective.” The excellence rating for the kick-off event ranges from 47% (item 1) to 74% (item 5). Any excellence measure above 20% is considered good, so participants were generally very impressed with the excellence of the program, especially in their overall evaluations (item 5).

Nearly half (16, or 44%) of respondents provided their name or other contact information on their forms, even though the form clearly labeled this information “Optional.” This measure also reflects a high level of satisfaction, as respondents are generally more willing to add their names to positive comments than to negative comments.

Over half (21, or 58%) of respondents included at least one comment with their evaluations. Most of these (13, or 62%) commented on the final item, the “overall” rating. Verbatim reports of all comments received are attached in Appendix A.

Vision and Values Workshops Evaluations

After the Saturday and Sunday workshops, 163 participants returned evaluation forms. These forms also contained five items, with places to rate each item on a five-point scale. The scale for the first three items was “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Uncertain,” “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree.” For the fourth and fifth items, the five-point scale was from “Highly Effective” to “Not Effective.” The form also provided space for comments for each item. A summary of the responses follows.

Responses to Saturday and Sunday Workshops Evaluation Forms

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
1. The workshop purposes were achieved.	85 52%	69 43%	8 5%	0 0%	0 0%	162 100%
2. The workshop discussions addressed the issues that are most important to me.	96 59%	62 38%	2 1%	3 2%	0 0%	163 100%
3. I had an opportunity to express my views fully on the issues discussed.	111 69%	44 27%	4 2%	3 2%	0 0%	162 100%
Item	Highly Effective				Not Effective	Total Responses
4. My rating and feedback on the leaders of the workshop small group discussions:	113 70%	44 27%	5 3%	0 0%	0 0%	162 100%
5. My rating and comments on the meeting overall:	109 67%	50 31%	2 1%	1 1%	0 0%	162 100%

These responses generated high ratings on the three key measures:

- *Customer satisfaction rate* ranges from 96% (item 3) to 98% (item 5). Any satisfaction measure above about 65% is considered good, so participants were generally very highly satisfied with the kick-off event.
- *Customer dissatisfaction rate* ranges from 0% (items 1 and 4) to 2% (items 2 and 3). Most businesses strive to keep customer dissatisfaction as low as possible; a dissatisfaction score of 10% generally indicates a serious problem. Participants generally were not dissatisfied with the workshops. Even items 2 and 3, with a 2% dissatisfaction rate, do not indicate a problem.
- *Excellence rate* for the workshops ranges from 52% (item 1) to 70% (item 4). Any excellence measure above 20% is considered good, so participants were generally very impressed with the excellence of the program, especially in their evaluations of the workshop facilitators (item 4).

Just over half (83, or 51%) of respondents opted to provide their name or other contact information on the evaluation forms, slightly more than the 44% of respondents to the Friday kick-off event. This measure also indicates satisfaction, as people are willing to be accountable for their evaluations.

Well over half (96, or 59%) of respondents provided at least one comment on the evaluation form. Most of these (72, or 75%) provided comments on item 5, the overall evaluation item. Verbatim reports of all comments received are attached in Appendix B.

Summary

Participants in the Vision for the Future Weekend were very pleased with both sets of events, the Friday evening kick-off and the Saturday and Sunday workshops. In fact, a much higher than expected number of walk-in participants arrived for later workshops, anecdotally attributable to positive word-of-mouth about the earlier workshops. As one participant stated, “I’m here because my wife came to an earlier workshop, and she told me to get my butt off the sofa and come here.”

For both events, customer satisfaction was very high, generally in the mid-90% range. Customer dissatisfaction was very low, never rising above 3%, and not a single bottom rating—“Strongly Disagree” or “Not Effective”—was reported on any form received. The excellence rating for both events was also very high, almost always over 50%, and reaching as 70% for workshop facilitators, and 74% for the overall kick-off event rating.

The comments received provide valuable insight into participants’ feelings about the event. The simple fact that well over half of the respondents for each event took the time and trouble to provide comments indicates a high level of enthusiasm for the Natick 360 strategic planning process.

Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Vision for the Future Weekend Appendix A. Kick-Off Event Participants' Verbatim Comments

The following tables report verbatim participant comments on the 36 evaluation forms received for the Natick 360 kick-off event, Friday, October 27, 2006.

In these tables, the "Ref. No." is a sequence number referencing each evaluation form received. The "Score" is a value assigned to the ratings for each question, where "5" represents "Strongly Agree" (items 1 through 4) or "Highly Effective" (item 5), and "1" represents "Strongly Disagree" (items 1 through 4) or "Not Effective" (item 5). The "Signed" column indicates whether the participant provided his or her name on the form.

Item 1. The meeting purposes were achieved

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
2	3	Not sure meeting purposes were stated	
4	3	The speaker was very good and interesting, but his topic only applies to one aspect of the planning that needs to be done.	Yes
16	5	Well done	Yes
18	5	Not sure, but it "set the table" for the planning	
25	4	Anthony Flint was great.	Yes
35	5	A lot of things needed to happen – all done efficiently	

Item 2. This meeting helped me become more aware of the Natick 360 strategic planning process.

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
4	4	I wish there was some representation of the challenges facing all the town boards on the committee	Yes
25	4	Already knew	Yes

Item 3. This meeting helped me learn more about how Natick is today.

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
4	3	The charts and preparation pamphlets are ver5y good and helpful (packet).	Yes
25	4	Census info. was terrific	Yes
27	2	I am already aware of most issues. Don't think that was purpose of this session	Yes

Item 4. This meeting helped me learn more about “smart growth” trends.

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
1	5	Anthony Flint was so instrumental in tonight's meeting. He defined smart growth trends beautifully.	Yes
7	5	Very interesting!	
9	4	I already was aware of smart growth initiatives but not what has already happened.	Yes

Item 5. My rating and comments on the meeting overall:

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
3	5	I enjoyed the evening; most information.	
4	5	Nice kick-off	Yes
5	5	A well organized & informative evening. Data [are] of great value. Visuals in hall well done.	Yes
12	5	Great speakers – good PowerPoint pictures!	Yes
15	5	Looking forward to further meeting.	
19	5	Not enough about Natick yesterday, but I assume that will be in the report	Yes
20	5	Wonderfully informative evening! Hats off to all of you!	
22	4	The Flint & Barrera presentations were well done. The project manager's presentation could be more lively & simplified	
23	5	Great speakers – next time perhaps more time for Q&A	
27	5	Overall, I thought the session served the purposes and set the stage for future sessions	Yes
31	5	Great job everyone!	
33	5	Probably too much information, i.e., 2 different presentations.	
34	5	Great preparation	Yes

Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Vision for the Future Weekend Appendix B. Workshops Participants' Verbatim Comments

The following tables report verbatim participant comments on the 163 evaluation forms received for the Natick 360 series of workshops, Saturday and Sunday, October 28-29, 2006.

In these tables, the "Ref. No." is a sequence number referencing each evaluation form received. The "Score" is a value assigned to the ratings for each question, where "5" represents "Strongly Agree" (items 1 through 3) or "Highly Effective" (items 4 and 5), and "1" represents "Strongly Disagree" (items 1 through 3) or "Not Effective" (items 4 and 5). The "Signed" column indicates whether the participant provided his or her name on the form.

Item 1. The meeting purposes were achieved

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
6	5	I was pleased to see new faces in the crowd who expressed thoughtful opinions	Yes
15	5	So nice to hear commonalities & agreement w/i and across groups	Yes
16	5	Wide range of voices heard	Yes
23	5	Excellent discussion	Yes
33		Great energy & organization.	Yes
47	4	It stayed on track & was paced appropriately	
48	5	I didn't understand real purpose before I came but as I was and the purpose was explained I think it was achieved	Yes
52	5	Phillip was a good facilitator	Yes
53	3	Will need to see the resulting reports	
55	4	Fun to talk	
73	5	I learned more about Natick than I knew.	Yes
74	5	I was encouraged because diverse people have same ideas for a great Town.	Yes
77	5	Well done!! 5 star.	Yes
82	4	No discussion of economic realities. How do we prioritize. Need more discussion regarding how to prioritize & pay for some of them.	Yes
84	3	This will be determined in the future.	Yes
86	4	I was surprised that people had lots of common concerns & experiences, values. I am concerned some details may be lost in summarization.	Yes
88	4	The discussion was very good. It is unclear to me how the summary process could capture it all.	
89	5	My group had many comments about how to improve Natick and we all worked really hard	Yes
90	5	We all had ideas for our town and have a view that we want	Yes

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
91	4	The overall outcome/ideas were a good mix, all important and all well considered	
94	3	What was the goal? (may have missed this intro b/c was 15 mins late) – Tilt towards involvement or substance? Concerned about superficial res. Involvement & too much reliance on comm.	Yes
96	5	Many new faces expressing their opinion	Yes
97	5	This has been a great opportunity for residents to share their vision	Yes
110	5	Great meeting.	Yes
119	3	Only here at end	Yes
138	5	This is a great idea that should continue. Thanks to the people running this!	Yes
147	5	Great process!	Yes
150	5	Very exciting	Yes
155	4	I wish the present discussion inc. what we don't like as I felt I had to tailor future to address that rather than greater vision of the future	Yes

Item 2. The workshop discussions addressed the issues that are most important to me.

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
6	5	Common themes were remarkable	Yes
16	4	I learned that others (many others) view public education as a key priority.	Yes
36	5	We need a town pool!	
48	5	The open forum allowed everyone (including myself) the opportunity to address any including important issues.	Yes
73	4	Some topics (school system) dominated and I felt we needed to talk about other issues too.	Yes
86	4	Hard to include everything, some things were hard to represent (more about how than what & we talked about what)	Yes
89	5	We talked about open space/parks, downtown Natick, and improving the Rec. Center & schools	Yes
90	4	I do believe many of the discussions spoken of do involve me and my friends, but there are issues for kids w/o licenses would need of improvement	Yes
91	4	Everyone got a chance to speak, myself included.	
94	4	Would have been good to have “3-5 priorities” discussion instead of/between “1 wish” and “20 yrs out” – and ask who intends to be her 5, 10, 15 yrs out. Why/Why not?	Yes
97	5	Consistency in topics across groups is very positive.	Yes
110	5	Wonderful to hear what others say about town	Yes
128	4	Yes, but there was a lot of complaining and tangents	
138	4	My only concern is that there could be more diversity of participants	Yes
148	5	I very much enjoyed hearing other people's vision & feelings for Natick.	Yes

Item 3. I had an opportunity to express my views fully on the issues discussed.

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
23	4	Would love to talk more, but then others couldn't. The balance was great	Yes
24	5	The time pressure was a bit tight.	
47	5	Everyone had an opportunity to speak.	
48	5	The small group atmosphere allowed everyone to express their views. Everyone was respectful to hear other views.	Yes
57	5	The small size of the groups facilitated input from everyone	Yes
67	4	:-)	Yes
86	5	Surprised some people did not speak up as much, but I did	Yes
90	5	I spoke my mind and think I got plenty of my ideas out in the open	Yes
91	4	People were respectful, and the moderator did a good job.	
94	2	Not fully – but initially with the group	Yes
96	4	Great group comments.	Yes
98		I came to listen. I'm already too noisy (and involved).	Yes
102	3	I think we could have used at least another 30 minutes. Would have liked to get more specific.	
109	5	Small groups of 3 good idea – gave everyone a chance to put down ideas. Ten we go trends when we saw list for all small groups	
113	4	In the closing summary, something came up I didn't agree with (a pub downtown) but there was not time to dissent	Yes
115	4	We (obviously) could have spent much more time on any number of topics	Yes
121	4	Express views on several, yes. There are specific issues I'd love to be involved in discussing more than we got to.	Yes
128	2	The tone was more negative and angry rather than visionary and hopeful	
138	5	It was a comfortable & open environment	Yes
142	4	A couple of people dominated	
147	5	Great process!	Yes
161	3	It's nice when facilitators specifically draw out us quieter folks & make sure we've said everything we needed to.	

Item 4. My rating and feedback on the leaders of the workshop small group discussions:

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
6	5	Lynne was friendly, articulate and asked good questions when something needed clarification	Yes
15	5	Our facilitator was soft spoken; could be louder; acoustics not great; we had to split in smaller groups; both good and bad	Yes
16	5	Facilitated w/out intruding	Yes
25	4	A <u>little</u> tighter control would've been good	Yes
48	5	Our leader was terrific. She listened, facilitated, answered questions	Yes
65	5	Lynne did a great job facilitating.	
77	5	Excellent skills	Yes
83	5	Kevin was terrific at eliciting feedback from all participants, but never made us feel rushed.	Yes
84	4	I would suggest talking a little bit about the process this was modeled after in the beginning.	Yes
86	4	Sometime I thought the small group moderator could have been stronger to keep on topic or to help quiet people speak up, but it worked anyway.	Yes
89	5	People agreed with me and listened to my ideas	Yes
90	5	Phillip got our group involved and talking. I think me and my brother got to express what we thought.	Yes
91	4	Strayed from the outline, so the sub-groups organized responses gave more to a mix of things to preserve/things to change	
94	3	Best thing – not to get in the way (depth of facilitation based on goal – see #1)	Yes
108	5	Excellent facilitators	Yes
123	5	Orderly, inclusive	Yes
126	4	Very well selected group of facilitators	Yes
128	3	#6 Red/Green Group	
129	5	Kevin was great!	Yes
136	5	Very excellent facilitator, Lynne Brown	
137	5	Kevin O'Sullivan	Yes
139	5	Phil was/is great!	
148	5	O'Sullivan was excellent	Yes
150	5	Kevin was terrific.	Yes
155	5	I thought they were great. I just wish there were questions on concerns now.	Yes
159	5	Great facilitation (Phillip)	Yes

Item 5. My rating and comments on the meeting overall:

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
1	5	Hope that there is solid planning in the future to keep well planned town with open space	Yes
2	4	Nice job!	
3	5	Congratulations on moving Natick forward	Yes
5	4	I was proud to contribute to a vision for Natick. Thank you for the work involved in putting together Natick 360.	Yes
6	5	Was organized; time schedule perfect	Yes
11	2	Thank you	
13	4	Well-run, great idea. Lots of good ideas expressed. But – Depends highly upon the participants – if more older/younger people come, the opinions expressed may change.	Yes
15	5	So glad to be a part – Would love to have an e-newsletter keeping us all apprised of progress	Yes
16	4	Thank you. Great process.	Yes
17	5	Very worthwhile activity!	Yes
20	4	I would like to help.	Yes
22	5	Very productive, informational and exciting!	Yes
24	5	Overall, I think that things went well – I'm interested to see the results.	
26	5	Very constructive & informative & extremely well organized	
29	5	I am looking forward seeing what transpires from this.	
30	5	Great job!	
35	5	Who sets up Phase II strategic plan & sets costs? Is it objective? No agendas?	Yes
38	5	Spread out the town “power brokers” among the groups, i.e., administrator, superintendent, finance committee members, etc.	
40	5	Excellent opportunity to share & brainstorm	Yes
41	5	Lots of congruence for top issues – but you need to look carefully at the subtext of each group. I will be very interested in the next phase where we have to <u>choose</u> .	Yes
43	5	Really well run & organized. Need to follow up to entire community – not just via web/email.	
44	5	Very well organized. Excellent effort to get input from all.	
46	5	There are very useful details on the charts from small groups – I hope they will be analyzed in preparing strategic policies & programs.	
47	5	I walked away learning more than before the workshops. People wire fair about listening to one another.	
48	5	I received more info.	Yes
49	4	Excellent initiative!	Yes
51	5	Thank you!	Yes
52	5	Very well done	Yes
55	4	If something concrete actually happens one day!	
57	4	I'm very interested in the follow-up in May	Yes

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
62	4	It was a good learning experience. Interesting to see what people value. Hard to imagine how you can translate the flip charts to action steps, but good luck.	
63	4	I wasn't able to attend Friday night, so it would've been helpful to have a little more background on this process, but this really isn't a major criticism.	
64	5	Well done!	
67	5	Thanks for this important step!	Yes
71	5	Thank you for doing this.	
73	4	I truly appreciate the opportunity to meet others in the town.	Yes
77	5	A superb experience	Yes
79	4	Professionally coordinated. Good job. It makes me even more proud of Natick.	Yes
80	4	Since this was not a truly random group, many had (or seemed) come with an "agenda" which was pushed at every opportunity.	
82	5	I think this is a good way to get a cross-section of the community	Yes
86	4	This was great, hard to do, and was done well	Yes
89	5	3 out of 5 of the group's main topics were things I cared about.	Yes
90	5	This meeting will definitely make an effective improvement (not change) to Natick as a whole	Yes
94	3	Good start. Thank you. Glad to participate – value substance, not just process; think we need rigorous, creative thinking for Town.	Yes
96	5	Well organized. Kept it going, not boring but very engaging – New faces which is great!	Yes
97	5	Thanks to the committed Town volunteers	Yes
98	5	Good job in not-so-easy environment	Yes
102		This was a great event and would be a great annual event.	
107	5	Unfortunately many of the problems are regional/national, not just local which makes solutions difficult.	
108	5	Much work to be done! Good luck!	Yes
110	5	Great meeting – would love to do more for town.	Yes
114	4	As a starting point – this was great	
116	5	Great to be a part of this exciting process!	Yes
117	5	Great process	
119	5	If acted upon	Yes
122	4	Many good ideas. Putting some of them into effect is the next big challenge. Glad you will solicit opinions from the sectors of the population that would not tend to participate in these sessions.	
125	4	Since the people attending were self-selected, probably do not represent the typical view of many living in Natick	
127	5	Keep the momentum going on 360°! Can we do more between now and May?	Yes
129	5	I am thrilled that I came & this process has encouraged me to become more involved.	Yes
130	4	It will be very interesting to see May meeting feedback	Yes
132	5	Very impressed with the process!	Yes

Ref. No.	Score	Comment	Signed
137	5	Open space understated @ summary (vs. discussion group)	Yes
138	5	Keep up the good work	Yes
139	4	Great idea – I would just like to see what we all agreed upon to actually happen in the future.	
146	5	Excellent	
147	5	Nice work!	Yes
149	5	Great to learn more. Looking forward to more pro-active activity in town.	
151	5	Thank you <u>so</u> much for doing this! I hope more than just the top few ideas from each group will be compiled & used.	
155	4	The room was not good – tables were far apart & couldn't move – kitchen noise prevented us from hearing.	Yes
157	5	Fantastic use of time	Yes
160	5	Thank you so much for doing all the work to make this happen for Natick!	Yes
162	5	Thanks to whomever brought this to fruition	Yes