

# Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



## Values and Vision Statements Consolidation of Boards, Committees and Public Input

### Preface

The Vision for the Future Weekend workshops, October 27-29, 2006, included 20 facilitated small-group discussions that generated 55 pages of transcribed easel pad notes. The project manager consolidated these notes around values and vision elements, eliminated duplication of ideas, tracked the number of small groups that mentioned each topic, and grouped the ideas around about a dozen general topics. This consolidation and condensation process resulted in an 11-page document.

During November 13-16, 2006, a panel of the public and representatives of the five Boards and Committees who sponsor the Natick 360 strategic planning process reviewed the values and vision materials from the workshops. The purposes of these reviews were:

- To share the information among the participating members;
- To identify what stands out as important in the materials; and
- To write values statements and vision statements for the Town based on the important ideas in the workshop materials.

The five sponsoring Boards and Committees are: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee Planning Board and School Committee. A session open to the public was also held, and five members of the public participated.

This document contains unedited transcripts of the facilitated meeting of the five sponsoring Boards and Committees, plus the public session. The transcripts are divided into three sections: Values, Vision and Feedback. Within each section, each set of Board or Committee notes is preserved intact. The Public session generated no Vision elements, and neither the Public session nor the School Committee session generated Feedback elements.

The information in these notes will be used to generate a set of proposed values statements and vision statements that all the sponsoring Boards and Committees can support. Members of the five sponsoring Boards and Committees will discuss these proposed statements December 11-14, and will consider accepting them more formally at a later meeting.

### Natick 360

The Natick 360 strategic planning process is a citizen-driven approach to creating a long-range plan for the Town of Natick. It 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, to develop Values and Vision 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 Fall 2007 Town Meeting will consider adopting the final strategic plan.

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, independent consultants, manages and facilitates the process.

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## Values: What We Want To Preserve...

### *Board of Selectmen*

Natick Common –

- A sense of downtown – focal point
- Space for community activities to occur
- A valued piece of open space

Generational diversity –

- Families w/ young children
- “Age in place” - & all in between

Affordability of Housing

- Ensures that the community remains diverse economically
- Want to make sure people can afford to live here

Business Diversity – jobs, taxes – want to attract Leading Edge & “Mom & Pop” & all in between

Preserve local autonomy re: development / growth

- We want it to be our decisions, not an outside agency
  - Where we'll put housing
  - Where we'll put businesses
  - Where we'll put what kind of each...
  - Physical layout, AND public services

Preserve the financial stability of the town

- Don't want to see operational overrides
- Be able to afford to stay within our means

Reality Check: Money!

Taxes, Shifts, Priorities

Zero-Sum Game – 2½% property tax cap / 3% annual pay raise

Overrides? Pay per throw trash fees

- Preserve the value of services – find ways to improve the ROI for the taxpayers' dollar.

Libraries – Many services

- If we want citizens / community to grow & prosper, the libraries provide things useful & necessary.
  - Internet access! Books!
- Libraries – gateway to the community

A very involved citizenry and sense of volunteer-ship – it's unbelievable. AND – the opportunities for people to be/become engaged.

- A very welcoming community. People accepted me – I was a newcomer
- Civic spirit & sense of community
- The businesses in this town are singular in their support for town & activities
- “Ordinary people get involved”
- We reach out to involve citizens

Preserving this form of town government

- Remains accessible
- Communicates w/ community
- Government made up of diverse, caring, professional employees – respectful
- Town government – very open – continue – even more open

Libraries – Continue to encourage? Provide access to arts – participation & observation

Senior Services – continue / preserve

People can't afford to live in the town – we need to be a place where people can afford to live.

325 participated in the Vision for the Future Weekend, out of 35,000 total population.

Recognize the talents and contributions of all our citizens, all stripes, incomes, backgrounds, size of contribution, type of contribution

Preserve the green space we have now! “Not too many fewer trees!”

### ***Conservation Commission Subcommittee***

Natick Center – preserve or develop it in a way that reflects the historic, small town feel. It can be a focal point for activities. Services, libraries, arts – Natick “Center” (gravitational pull).

- The Center represents the small town historic feel. Embodies that feel/idea.
- We actually moved here, to get away from that Small Town Feel. Natick lets you be involved, or not! I like to do my own thing, value my privacy, and be involved when I want.
  - Individuality
  - Community
  - Choice
  - More tolerant?

More and easier access to Boston's cultural activities.

I spent many years in Needham. Its downtown is/was in better physical shape than Natick's. There are good buildings in Natick downtown – But we better be careful to preserve those structures. The stained glass is gorgeous. But – how do we maintain/preserve?

Other towns – sub rosa commentary – more tolerant, diverse, comfortable here. We need to keep this. Maintain tolerance with diversity. Groups – Newcomers, Middle Newcomers, Natives. I was welcomed as a newcomer, regaled with the stories about the town. I was welcomed with candidness. New England is not a “welcoming” place, but once you meet people, they are pretty genuine.

Diversity – Population and economic base. Geographic diversity (Mall, open space and farms, multiple “systems.”) Major companies, expensive estates. Diversity is a strength. Inclusiveness – I was able to get involved (as a newcomer) very easily.

Size of the town – “Right Sizing.” What would be the right size? Water resources? Well water capacity? Housing stock? The size of the town relates to the feel of tolerance and anonymity. If it were much bigger, does that lead too quickly to claustrophobia? Too much?

Local control (autonomy) over development -- ???

The form of government – Residents need to have a say, to retain control. There’s a deeply committed cadre of citizens with a high sense of ownership, commitment, connectedness and attachment. This is a Core Cadre – active, dynamic (depending on the issue, it will expand or contract).

The form of government – People have no compunction or hesitancy re: going in front of the Board of Selectmen. It’s quite a show!

The presence of a significant number of private schools lends to and enhances the “artsy” feel – worth preserving. Arts, Visual and Performing, Sports, Libraries. Arts, Culture, Recreation – it’s a well rounded town. It seems the private schools link to that. Walnut Hill School puts on incredible shows. Link to TCAN.

Education. Strong Special Ed, expansive curriculum. Preserve what we have there.

Preserve existing farms as working farms.

Safety – Physical safety / Crime. We rarely lock our houses. No part of Natick I wouldn’t go to. (Traffic, however is another issue!) And in nearby towns, it’s completely different.

- The Police department makes an effort to communicate – outreach.
- We have a first rate Fire Department.

Open Space – One important reason for this preservation concept is drinking water. Open space and wetlands; protecting the aquifer system providing our drinking water gives us great leverage (vs. MWRA).

Winona Farm and llamas. This is hugely valuable, beautiful – walking trails. Preserving farms – physical beauty of town maintains certain density – more open spaces, fewer houses.

Preserve open space and drive smart growth and development: clusters, mixed use, transit-oriented. All prime for Natick Center, and also South Natick.

The form of open space – diverse – NOT all football and soccer fields, but includes lakes, fields, farm, trails, etc. Lake Cochituate is a unique asset.

Labs and Lakes – (sediment / historical )

The lakes system – Morse, Dug, Lower, Pickerel, Sunk Away Pond. Natick has a lot of wetlands.

## ***Finance Committee Subcommittee***

Small town “feel”

- Safety
- Self-sustaining
- Accessibility
- Active
- Sports
- Vibrant downtown
- Neighborhood school creates a small town feel

Physical infrastructure:

- Transportation alternatives;
- Roads;
- Physical layout reduces options;
- Don’t take care of it; they take a lot of care.
- Keep the ability to get around at 5:00 p.m.
- Retail business corridor on Route 9; chains; pays for a lot; contain this; large town amenities
- Downtown mom and pop businesses; small town; neighbors

Affordability

- Town employees live here
- Sons and daughters; returning children
- Young families
- [Condos and density is not answer (negative value)]
- [Affordability works against other objectives (negative value)]
- Some things can be done: reduce lot size (Planning Board)
- Link to diversity value: Make Natick affordable to a wide range of diverse populations

Affordable recreation and open spaces

- Trails; connected
- Sports; tied to schools
- [Fees concern (negative value)]

Strong education

- Especially elementary schools; high quality
- Keep quality teachers

Safe for kids to go out; feel safe in Town; small town feel.

[Fear traffic cutting through neighborhood (negative value)]

Diversity

- We value diversity of population, intergenerational, socio-economic, political, religion, cultural, racial and ethnic
- Ties to affordability

Historical sites; preserve graveyard behind the fire station and Eliot Church in South Natick

Keep our representative form of government

- Want to stay a Town
- Want to keep accessibility to government
- Keep opportunities to get engaged

### ***Planning Board***

Affordable housing

- Town service employees
- Preserve affordability for young families and Town employees, when and where possible; accessible to variety of people with different means.
- Should be downtown, but not all.
- Pro-active planning for affordability
- Affordable housing for seniors; less traffic impacts.

Town Center: keep it; public facilities

- Senior Center downtown
- TCAN and cultural center
- Business center: retail, start-up incubator
- Dense housing surrounding downtown
- Develop pulse-points, clusters around Town

Density and affordability:

- Smaller lot sizes; less McMansions; smaller homes; starter homes; 6 lots per acre.
- Tie home size to lot size; floor area ratio (held illegal by Court; needs Legislative action)

Natick is wonderful place to raise children (10 and under); recreation, education, library, etc.

Scope and scale; not daunting; neighborhoods to fit kid size; scope is continuity of Town.

Lot of open space, farms, Broadmoor, lakes, state park

Connectivity and interaction of neighborhoods; volunteerism is part of connectivity; small-town feel; organic and natural.

Preserve diverse economically and age groups; tradition of Town: Albanian, Poles, Italians; see schools of past, 1950's.

Value identify as a Town, not just bedrooms; invested in what happens; opinions; connectivity; volunteer-based Town; small Town staff; rest are volunteers; recreation organizers.

Preserve form of government; representative Town Meeting; public access to policy-making and influence decision; average people can impact decisions; not like Newton.

## ***School Committee***

All day kindergarten

Reasonable class size [K, E, M: <25; ideal<20; HS varies by subject]

Natick High School Pride; sports and extracurricular programs

Middle School tech ed

Maintain strong curriculum

- Content
- Diversity of course offerings
- Delivery

Quality of teachers: recruitment and retention

Culture of continuous improvement in Administration, teachers, parents, School Committee

Special ed services: creative programs created and implemented in Natick: in-District, rather than out-of-district; keep them together and in-Town; “Creating better value of individual students.”

Pre-school: aspect of special ed; extension of early intervention program

Involvement of community in schools

- Community involved in schools, administration and PTOs
- Use by community of facilities

Town investments in modern and functional school facilities; Town’s recognition of the need for investment

Meeting needs of all learners

Community service by students

Values:

Natick residents are nice:

- Sense of community
- Preserve level of non-personal discussion and debate

Value farms and activities such as Natick Days

## ***Members of the Public***

Commitment to diversity and link to affordability; strength is economic and age-group diversity.

Housing type: condos, apartments, single-family, rural; options, variety and choices.

Affordability; people of different economic means can fully participate in society.

Educate folks about links: jobs, housing, affordability.

Expanding houses to include economic diversity; also age

Redevelop already-developed land and preserve open space.

Strong & burgeoning arts adds a dimension that is valuable. Economic value of arts businesses.

Collaboration; local business part of the process; part of the community.

Unique tax base:

- Value downtown small businesses
- Benefit from single tax rate

Diverse economic base with low- to high-paying jobs; don't have migration strategy for moving lower-paid folks into higher pay.

Link Mall to downtown, by trail(?) Mall provides tax resources.

Tie between economic groups and the diversity that this leads to cultural diversity.

Value of the base and the good citizen role that Army plays, and employment opportunities; part of diversity; good neighbor.

Growth and preservation of open space linkage; balance; control development in a responsible way.

Development should conform to the neighborhood; preserve character of the neighborhood.

Acceptance of differences among people.

Diversity of business.

Intergenerational diversity.

Socio-economic diversity (18 groups!); affected by growth and redevelopment.

Commitment to important sub-sections: veterans, seniors, lower income population; youth (integrating older with younger)

Neighborhood mini-cores; example is South Natick.

Small town neighborhood; connectedness.

Neighborhoods connected in a walkable way; bike, hike trails.

Linking opens spaces together, downtown to Mall, and neighborhood to neighborhood.

Education: improving but need to improve more. Need a new building, but need more.

Lots of opportunities to become engaged in Town life; see next generation involvement.

Need more public forums.

Balance taxes and socio-economic diversity.

Natick is not an island; value easy access to Boston.

Historical integrity of Natick Center architecture, even in new buildings.

Vibrant downtown; locally-owned businesses and not chains. Not a strip mall! Revitalize structures.

- Potential transit hub: bus, rail, walk, cars.

More collaboration/cooperation between the school community and the rest of the Town.

Spend money, but get value for it.

Trade off: good schools, while maintaining diversity

Preservation of architectural interest (even in new buildings)

Reusing buildings to preserve open space; effective integration of new and old.

Preserve astonishing natural habitat resources and farms; but not connected; dispersed.

Feeling of safety; safe kids; don't lock doors.

Small Town feeling / large Town amenities.

Sense of Community.

Diverse means of transportation; not just a car; waling, bike, connection; gain connectedness using alternative means.

Great recreation activities; sports & events; people interact with each other through these events.

Neighborhoods: cottages around lake; postwar slab construction; historic; large sprawling homes.

## ***Members of the Public Value Statements***

More of the same; how can Natick of future look like Natick of today.

Keep small town community feel.

Natick values diversity; acceptance of differences: socio-economic, political, religion, cultural, racial, ethnic, intergenerational.

Natick residents value living in identifiable neighborhoods that are interconnected with each other.

Open space, while preserving the historic nature of the Town.

Natick residents value high-quality education.

Natick values its vibrant, centrally-located downtown, architecturally consistent, with access to transit and diverse local businesses.

Natick is a cultural destination for MetroWest Boston, with restaurants, galleries, lakes, cultural institutions (TCAN).

Natick is known as a welcoming, receptive community to newcomers and new businesses.

## **Vision**

### ***Board of Selectmen***

Town should be more responsive to a wider diversity of citizenry; increase 'representativeness' of Town Meeting

Natick will be affordable (not just housing)

There are several known capital projects – which ones to do?

- Senior Center
- High School
- Parking

Expand green space – note: Conservation Commission funds

Downtown – Natick Center – will be maintained, continue to be beautiful – 10 minute walk to many places

- Mom & Pop
- Corporate
- Local biz
- Natick resident – owned businesses
- History – buildings
- Vibrant @ night – (Pubs?)
- TCAN (great!) The downtown is too dead! Hey, by the way, Gourmet Decisions is now staying open later.
- Have a grocery/supermarket.

Think outside of the box re: revenues not part of the operating budget.

Have great schools with quality education –

- Preparation for lives and careers
  - Teachers are more important than buildings... Educators
- Schools have figured out ways to involve and serve a broader cross-section of the community.
- We see lots of information re: Keefe Tech Adult Ed
  - Want to see more of this from Natick
  - Schools/space need to be more openly accessible to the community

Natick Labs will stay and be maintained, serving as the largest employer in Natick. (It employs 1,300 people, of the 20,000 jobs in Natick, though very few Natick citizens work at the Labs.)

- However, it sits on prime land, pays no taxes, is not a large employer of Natick citizens, does represent a certain burden on the town (e.g., Water resources)

Kids and Family – the town will maintain a healthy and balanced view, with a community-wide commitment to good health

- Substance abuse, health, diet, wellness, domestic violence

Maintain a mixed tax base:

- Residential
- Boston Scientific / The MathWorks / Cognex / TJX – big corporations
- Small businesses – Debson Paint, Town Paint, etc.

The big businesses have engaged with the community – they share a significant sense of community.

Senior, Retirement / Over-55, Assisted Living – all of these forms of senior housing options and alternatives should be encouraged.

It's easier to get around without a car. Walk, Bike, Bus...

- Ease the traffic congestion.

Natick will continue to have an active and engaged community citizenry.

Community Feeling

- Several high-rises are going up near the Mall. In 20 years, those folks will be just as involved in their Town – integrated – with the same high level of participation as we see today from Natick citizens.

In 20 years, we will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Senior Center

- Senior Center
- Community Center
- Community Center with Senior Focus

## ***Conservation Committee Subcommittee***

Natick will ...

Have a vibrant, maintained, beautifully renovated downtown – a mix of businesses, housing, etc.  
(Physical aspect of the vision)

- Downtown – Farmer’s market, concerts on the common. To achieve this vision, we must address PARKING. “I avoid the downtown because there is no parking.”
- Pull the cars out of the downtown. Natick is in desperate need of a comprehensive traffic assessment.

Without expanding Rte. 27 or Speen Street, the traffic goes where it can be handled. This will be more important with new development. Route 9, the Mall – I can’t get out of my driveway. Channel the traffic – discourage cutting through the Center.

Have a Mixture. As the development evolves, pay attention to traffic “channels.”

Communication of what’s going on in the town. Voting at Town Meeting, newsletters in tax bills.

High level of participation on local affairs. We would have a local cable company providing a local government channel, broadcasting Board and Committee meetings. Visible. We have a way of explaining New England town government form, town meetings, etc.

Green, responsible, mobility strategies. Smart growth provides an opportunity to pull this all together. Natick can be recognized as a leader in this regard.

Affordable housing in (mixed –use) clusters, depending on where it goes. Nothing mixed use about 300 garden apartments. There need to be guidelines (Design Review Board).

Coupled with diverse economic base, employers, businesses. Economic development strategy. (Note – there are some dynamite underused parts of Route 9.)

Also – retirement community, assisted living facilities.

Natick will be less dependent on cars. Sidewalks. We have to be able to cross Route 9, all the way over to the Town Forest. Expanded regional transportation. We can take the bus to the train, to the Mall.

Have automobile-independent ways to link nodes in the town:

- Shuttles
- Buses to the Mall
- Bus to the train.
- Reverse commuter buses
- Rail Trail – connecting neighborhoods
- Safely – walk/ride, non-car. Here to the Mall and farther.

Existing farms will still be operating as working farms.

Natick will have adopted code, policy and practices for energy independence. Green municipal buildings. Municipal trucks on biodiesel. Tax incentives for residences. Town is committed to energy stewardship.

Natick High School touts a 12:1 Student/Teacher ratio. But each teacher has such a student load! NHS will have a Student/teacher ratio that will enable/support greater involvement with students, teachers, parents. Personal relationships.

- Visual and performing arts – a much greater Public School focus.
- Schools are aligned with and supporting and teaching environmental responsibility.
- Schools have truly adopted teaching to a wide variety of learning styles, including appropriate discipline and measurement systems. (Kids are pulled and sent to St. Joe's / Needham, where they are getting grades, rather than fuzzy reports.)

There is a new green High School, and we're not just taking paint!

A good consistent maintenance program to optimize/extend the lifetime of schools, roads, infrastructure, Town-wide.

Natick will continue the diversity of open space and natural resources. More of it protected and preserved, and appropriately maintained.

Trees – We have an ordinance! We protect them. We replace them, not just the scenic ways. We have a comprehensive natural resources protection mindset.

Natick has a comprehensive, codified set of rules to protect its resources – grass, water, trees, etc. (Xeriscaping™<sup>1</sup>)

- Building code should support the use of grey water.
- Underground utilities (“the absence of a vision!”) – get rid of the “vestigial” poles!

Natick has an intergenerational community center.

- A pool? Yes.
- Downtown? Perhaps right here (at the existing Kennedy Senior Center)?
  - It must be convenient for Seniors. This is a great location.
  - Linked to transportation.

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<sup>1</sup>“Xeriscape” is a trademark of Denver Water.

## ***Finance Committee Subcommittee***

Development: pro-active planning

- Working with developers; for example, Paperboard site; add 10 parking spaces to access trail by the property
- Compromise; willing to compromise to protect small town feel and sense of community; for open space and trails, etc.
- Mandate types of development sought; would be picking a site and developer and putting in what we want;
- Like HOOP (Housing Overlay Option Plan) plans; do more of this
- South Main Street; neighbors fought, so they got a 40B; not a successful process here
- Overlay transportation needs; as part of development; public transportation; mitigate impacts.
- Pods of self-sufficiency; encouraging small businesses in neighborhoods; buy groceries; go home and cook and walk the other direction for ice cream; no Natick example, but see Wayland shops at N. Main and Commonwealth Road.

No pool!

Transportation needs of the Town overlaid with development traffic considered; MBTA bus; make it possible for a 13 year old kid to get on a bus to the Mall.

Connecting to a strong downtown area by bus, paths, etc., while maintaining the neighborhoods and the Town-wide events at high school and downtown; mini-pods connected by pathways and trails.

Limit north-south through commercial traffic

- Road under power lines: commercial corridor; controlled through-traffic
- Pro-actively plan for future traffic impacts; get support from State for advance planning

Education: Excellence at all levels of the school system, elementary, middle school, high school

- Great shop/trade/tech programs
- Education geared to what's appropriate to students
- General education (not just college prep)
- Encourage students to take risks through broad range of choices/programs
- Critical thinking; how/want to think
- Smart construction and maintenance of facilities (Town-wide principle)
- Prioritize needs
- State-of-the-art facilities maintenance: MIS, HVAC, structural; facilities maintained to optimize use and life of facility.

Elementary schools: 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades in elementary, not in middle school

Plagiarism software in high school.

Whole spectrum of diverse corporations attracting socio-economically diverse people.

Government: participation, transparent; pay taxes, not fees (deduct taxes);

- Examples: athletic fees, bus fee, pay as you throw fees;
- Use taxes to support societal goals

Kept our hospital; added pediatric emergency.

Clean lake, water; no milfoil; storm flow contained (off Route 27).

Green buildings; including high school.

Playing fields; to AstroTurf® to limit chemical use.

Use methane; cogeneration

Natick Center: local businesses with small town feel.

Arts downtown; local business boon.

Parking for commuter rail in West Natick.

Parking downtown for local businesses, restaurants, TCAN, communities, etc.; use above rail space?

Let outsiders come in and spend money

Principle: get folks to work on time for commuters; rest is tactics

Effective dissemination of information by Town government; [(negative) example: paperboard negotiations; then neighbors said, "Wait, we didn't know!"]

Independent Board of Water Commissioners.

Lots more volunteerism; sense of community.

Diverse, inclusive, welcoming, vibrant, cohesive community, with connectedness and services for all ages.

Transportation options within Town.

Integrated, friendly software to access Town information; revisit budget information line item structure.

Fewer Town vehicles.

Town think strategies for cost reduction for essential services (for example: outsource; regionalization)

## *Planning Board*

Interconnected public transportation, as Town has grown.

Look like it did early 1950's

- Strong downtown commerce; work downtown
- Walk downtown, or public transportation
- [Negative value: Post WWII effort to destroy downtowns]
- Businesses provide jobs, activities, day and night; see WiFi (wireless wide-area Internet access) downtown and throughout Town, publicly supported and free.

Preserve open space

Downtown: townhouse housing, well-designed; supply of restaurants, tavern; mixture housing and restaurants, retail; true destination.

Community/Senior Center; near downtown and access to Library; programs; access to Town Hall; current Senior Center people choose to be isolated; include community center to get seniors not identified as such.

Schools integrated with community; looking outward; connectivity.

Library is success because it serves interconnections.

Teens don't have a lot to do; get them engaged in community; through community center(?)

Public transportation; appeal to teens; integrate school busses and public transportation; teens use public transportation to get to school.

Create Natick Chamber of Commerce; partner with residential and government sectors; reach out to community, which is next generation employees.

Well-used new high school, with pool; green building, playing fields; innovation.

Strive for excellence; be innovative leaders: local energy renewable facilities; hydro dam, passive solar; windmills maybe.

Well-used busy rail trail.

Well-paved streets with sidewalks or grade-separated paths for baby buggies.

Bike lanes; like Speen Street designs.

Envision future traffic needs; consider energy effects; use has increased due to through traffic.

Well designed, well-lit transportation

Electric power line easements; four-lane through access; preserve right-of-way; land bank for future.

Financially stable with developed integrated business and educational networks.

Regional solutions for transportation planning, rights-of-way, land banking, other; history of leadership in intergovernmental cooperation; golden rule.

Additional Town planning resources to accomplish all these visionary concepts; planners.

Attract businesses downtown.

Pro-active planning:

- Affordability,
- Transportation and traffic,
- Economic development;
- Long-range plans and priorities for all government functions;
- Communications between planning and public works and businesses and developers;
- Master plan land use zoning.

Exercise takings and develop lands by Town; partner for development: public/private initiatives.

- Natick Housing Authority has taking and bonding powers and has not done anything; elected and Governor appointees.
- Work in partnership with NHA; work in partnership with other Boards and Commissions. Shared vision is part of partnership: Conservation Commission; Appeals Board; Open Space Committee; Department of Public Works; Finance Committee; Board of Selectmen
- Planning staff is communicating.

Good schools

Schools built to last; not disposable; community proud of infrastructure; designed to be outward-looking to serve rest of community.

### ***School Committee***

Modern, functional facilities

“Home of America’s finest schools”

Educational excellence at all levels; address all diverse needs of students

Executing planned capital reinvestment in schools

New high school

State-of-the-art technology in the curriculum

Arts has focus equivalent to athletic focus

Expand curriculum; for example, foreign language options earlier, economics, social studies

Best, most qualified and highest paid teachers in the Commonwealth

World class results in schools

- Environment, facilities
- Culture
- Teachers

People understand real quality of schools: Natick schools tell their story well; share what they do well; get our story out there!

Integration of education process with seniors and professionals; help teach math, provide services; add to village

Currently: Drive Natick High School to be more-specialized college prep  
Future: Offer tech career options earlier

Every student has physical activity every day

A vibrant recreational program in Natick

Preserve and grow arts programs

Preserve and grow libraries, as first connection to the Town (preschool reading groups)

Trails, sidewalks and bike lanes; get where people want to get to by foot or by bike

More after-school transportation; life-changing for parents

Remove fee for school busses

Develop commitment to diversity

Government and community supports financing schools, rather than reacting to needs without goal choices

Education is a unifying goal of the community

Schools are #1 priority of the community; currently lower percentage than benchmark communities

See higher percentage of residents involved in schools and government

Community that makes choices and supports top priorities

## **Feedback**

### ***Board of Selectmen***

Positive – it was informal, allowing us to share our own opinions individually

Positive – Brainstorming – informally – is healthy

Positive – We focused on things that really matter

Positive – it's a chance to say what we want – plan and follow through.

Change – Would like to see more input from other citizens – see what they think

Change – Would like to see the entire Board have opportunity to talk to citizens.

### ***Conservation Commission Subcommittee***

Positive – It was good to see the breadth of the input – all the “semi-digested” data.

Change – Tell me what to do with the documents ahead of time

Change – Relate to us what is being discussed/considered at other meetings and groups

### ***Finance Committee Subcommittee***

Positive: Free form is great.

Positive: Open discussion.

Positive: Everyone was polite, and voices were heard.

Positive; good at being able to “hear” people

Change: Information ahead of time.

Change: Facilitated to think about this as outcome-based: “Want to get to the train on time.”

Change: What does it look like when we are done?

### ***Planning Board***

Positive: Voiced concerns, even though negative concerns (2).

Positive: Process is beneficial (2).

Positive: Got ideas not heard at Vision Workshop.

Positive: Showcase power of built environment in decisions.

Positive: Saw that some public perceptions are wrong and need education; and not sway plans by wrong information.

Positive: Well-facilitated.

Change: Didn't start on time; took a while to get going.

Change: Didn't need time to go over list.

Change: Staff wasn't here.