

Community Use & Recreation: Public Survey Synthesis

Town of Natick | Charles River Dam Advisory Committee

Dec 2021 - Jan 2022

Please note this version is from July 11, 2022, with corrected counts in columns 2-6 in the tables on pages 6-9.

Members of the public had the opportunity to share their thoughts, questions, and guidance on what community use and recreation features they would like to see in this area of Natick with the Advisory Committee through an online survey that was open from December 17, 2021 through January 16, 2022. In total, 980 individuals engaged at least partially with the survey, including 139 Kennedy Middle School students; the below synthesis indicates the number of responses per question. The following is a high-level synthesis of the survey responses received.

Respondents also shared additional thoughts and comments in writing, included in full in the appendices. In addition to sharing their thoughts on whether to remove or repair the spillway, respondents included additional input and guidance on community use and recreation for the Advisory Committee to consider. Some common themes from written comments included:

- Consider the costs associated with each option
- Design for accessibility and connectivity
- Design for improved canoeing and kayaking experience
- Focus on nature, peacefulness in park design
- Honor the Indigenous history and vision for this area
- Include sitting and picnicking areas
- Maintain the beauty and aesthetics of this iconic area
- Prioritize wildlife, ecology, and native plantings
- Preserve the existing mature tree growth

All written comments are included in full below, in Appendices A-C.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Q: What is your relationship to Natick?

Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 980 responded to this question.

| Response | % of Respondents | # of Respondents |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| I'm a Natick resident. | 90.41% | 886 |
| I'm not a Natick resident; I work or regularly spend time in Natick. | 5.31 % | 52 |
| I'm not a Natick resident; I do not work or regularly spend time in Natick | 0.92% | 9 |
| Other (please specify) | 3.37% | 33 |

Q: If you are not a Natick resident, what Town do you call home?

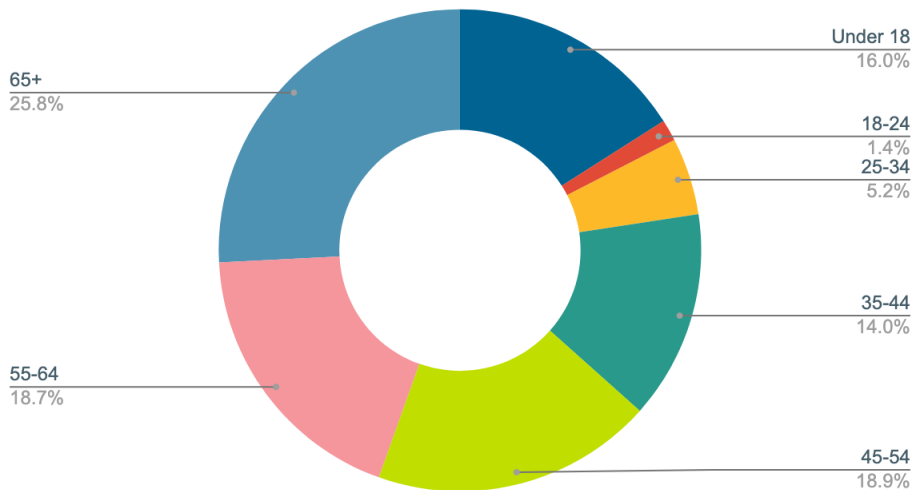
Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 55 responded to this question.

| Towns | # of Respondents | Towns | # of Respondents |
|------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Ashland | 2 | Needham | 1 |
| Boston | 2 | Norwood | 2 |
| Brookline | 1 | Sherborn | 3 |
| Cambridge | 1 | Stow | 1 |
| Dedham | 1 | Sudbury | 1 |
| Dover | 10 | Washington, D.C. | 1 |
| Framingham | 5 | Wellesley | 4 |
| Holliston | 3 | Westborough | 1 |
| Hopkinton | 1 | Weston | 1 |
| Medfield | 1 | Westwood | 1 |
| Melrose | 1 | Worcester | 1 |
| Milford | 1 | Wrentham | 1 |
| Millis | 1 | Unclear Responses or "Natick" | 7 |

Q: What is your age?

Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 907 responded to this question.

Age of Respondents:

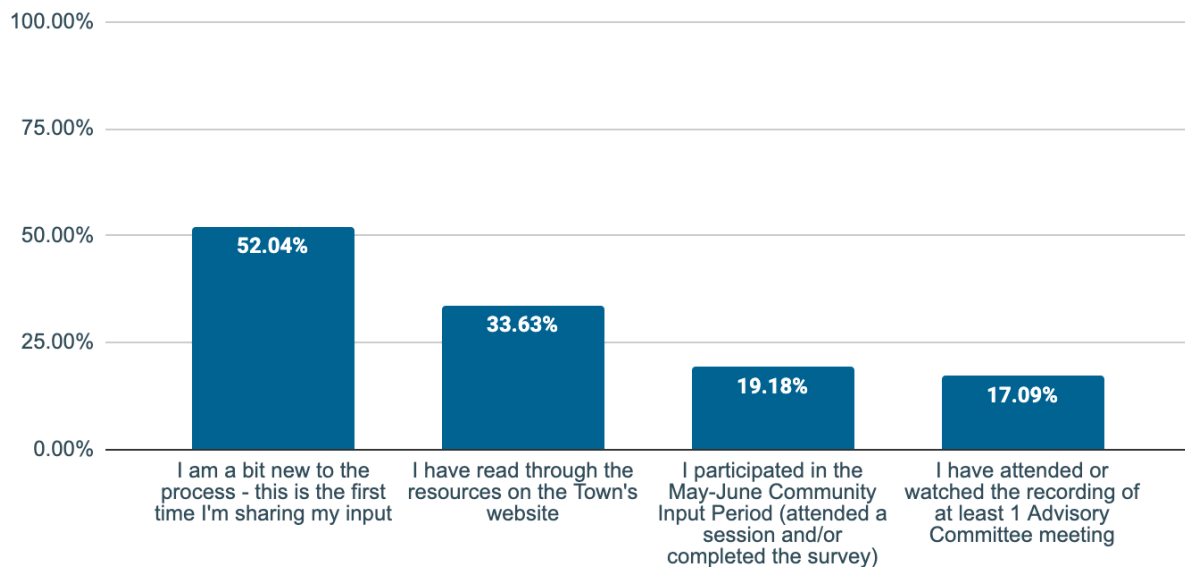


| Response | % of Respondents | # of Respondents |
|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Under 18 | 15.99% | 145 |
| 18-24 | 1.43% | 13 |
| 25-34 | 5.18% | 47 |
| 35-44 | 14.00% | 127 |
| 45-54 | 18.85% | 171 |
| 55-64 | 18.74% | 170 |
| 65+ | 25.80% | 234 |

Q: How much have you been tracking the Advisory Committee Process? Check all that apply.

Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 907 responded to this question.

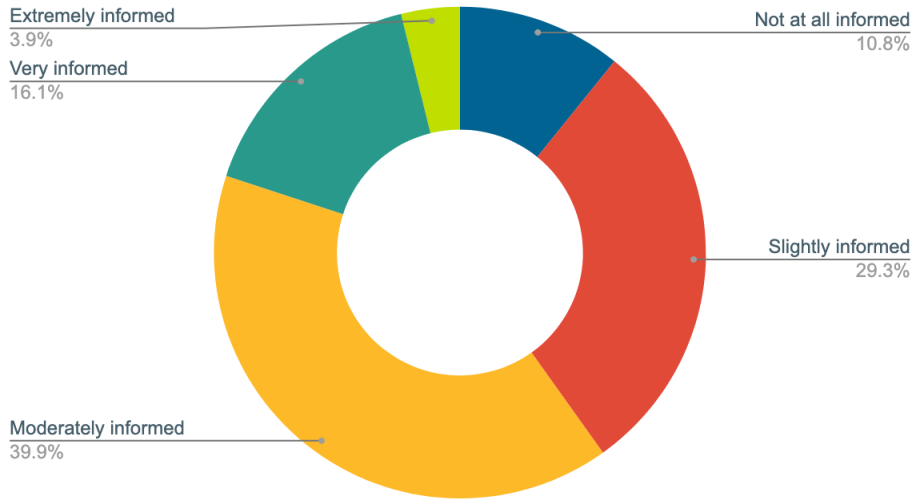
How much have you been tracking the Advisory Committee Process?



| Response | % of Respondents | # of Respondents |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| I am a bit new to the process - this is the first time I'm sharing my input | 52.04% | 472 |
| I have read through the resources on the Town's website | 33.63% | 305 |
| I participated in the May- June Community Input Period (attended a session and/or completed the survey) | 19.18% | 174 |
| I have attended or watched the recording of at least 1 Advisory Committee meeting | 17.09% | 155 |

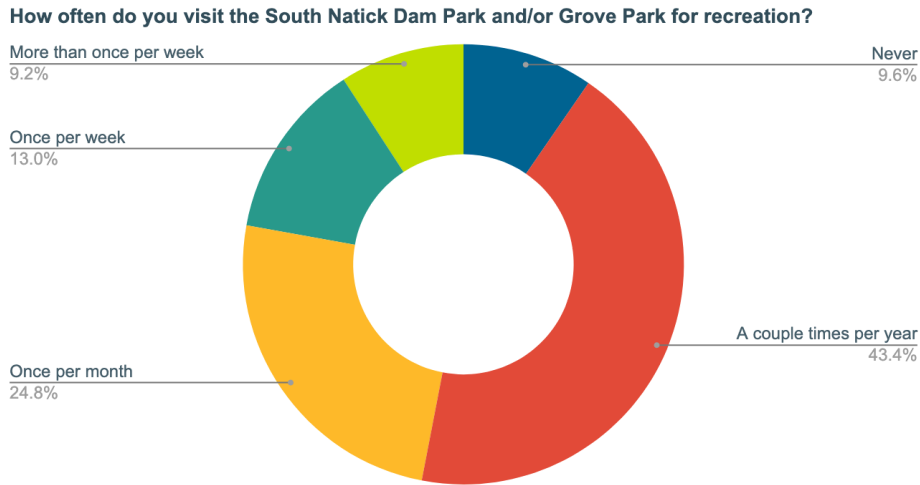
Q: How informed do you feel about this process and the decision in front of the Town?
 Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 907 responded to this question.

How informed do you feel about this process and the decision in front of the Town?



| Response | % of Respondents | # of Respondents |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Not at all informed | 10.80% | 98 |
| Slightly informed | 29.33% | 266 |
| Moderately informed | 39.91% | 362 |
| Very informed | 16.10% | 146 |
| Extremely informed | 3.86% | 35 |

Q: How often do you visit the South Natick Dam Park and/or Grove Park for recreation?
 Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 907 responded to this question.



| Response | % of Respondents | # of Respondents |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Never | 9.59% | 87 |
| A couple times per year | 43.44% | 394 |
| Once per month | 24.81% | 225 |
| Once per week | 13.01% | 118 |
| More than once per week | 9.15% | 83 |

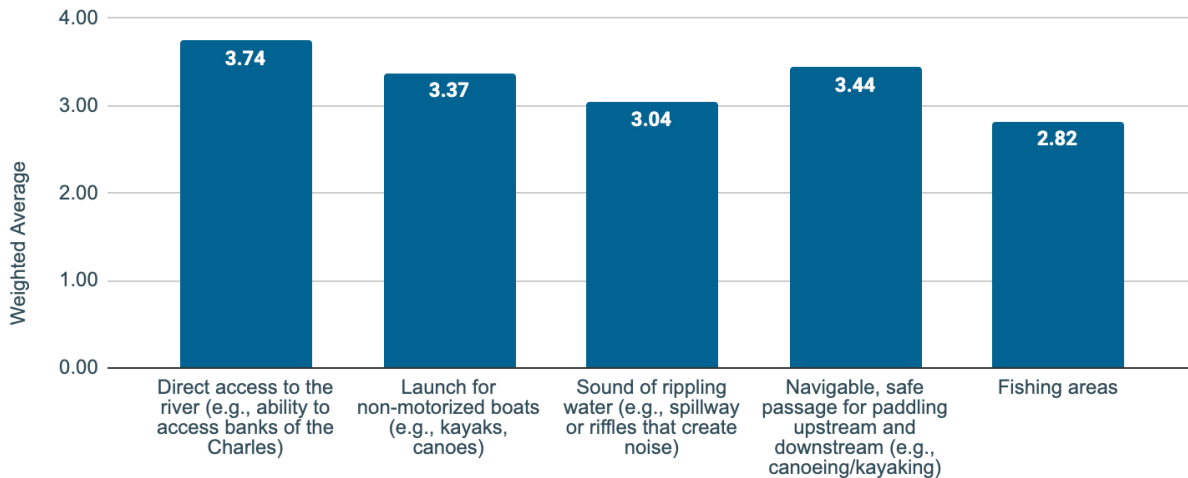
WHAT SHOULD THE FUTURE OF THIS AREA LOOK LIKE

Q: If you were in charge, what features would you tell the landscape architect are important to include in their design for directly along or in the Charles River, upstream and/or downstream?

Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 843 responded to this question. Responses are broken out below by the 777 respondents who are Natick residents, including KMS students, and the 66 respondents who do not reside in Natick. Other comments/suggestions were shared by 98 respondents; a complete exported list of comments is available in Appendix A.

Responses from Natick Residents:

Natick Residents: Directly Along or In the Charles River, upstream and/or downstream

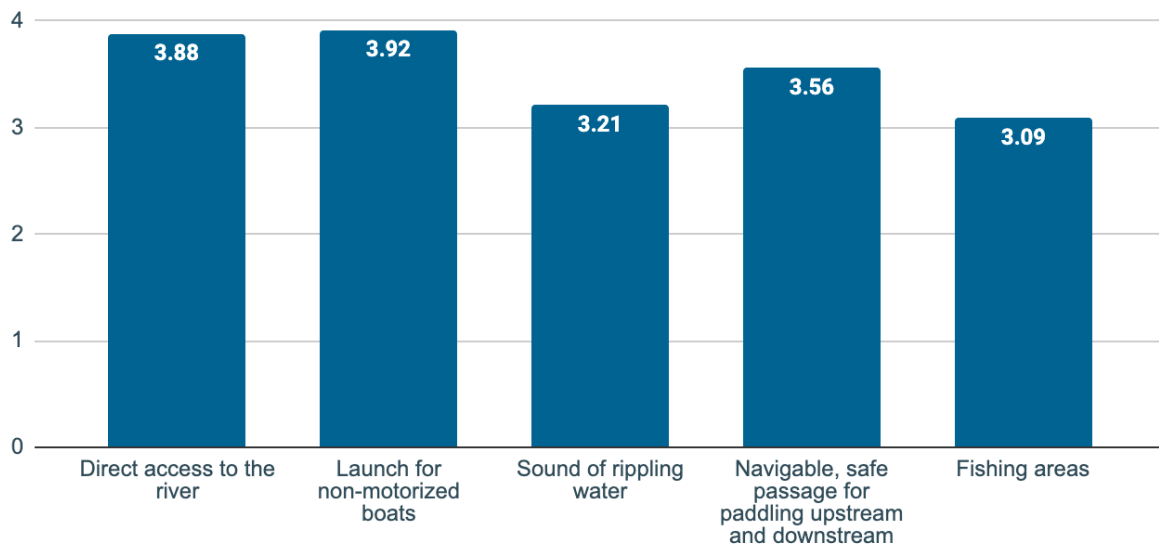


| Response | Not at all important | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important | Weighted Average |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Direct access to the river (e.g., ability to access banks of the Charles) | 26 | 78 | 187 | 249 | 224 | 3.74 |
| Launch for non-motorized boats (e.g., kayaks, canoes) | 71 | 104 | 210 | 229 | 151 | 3.37 |
| Sound of rippling water (e.g., spillway or riffles that create noise) | 137 | 152 | 168 | 161 | 148 | 3.04 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Navigable, safe passage for paddling upstream and downstream (e.g., canoeing/kayaking) | 65 | 96 | 198 | 256 | 153 | 3.44 |
| Fishing areas | 147 | 161 | 210 | 169 | 75 | 2.82 |

Responses from Non-Natick Residents:

Non-Natick Residents: Directly Along or In the Charles River, upstream and/or downstream

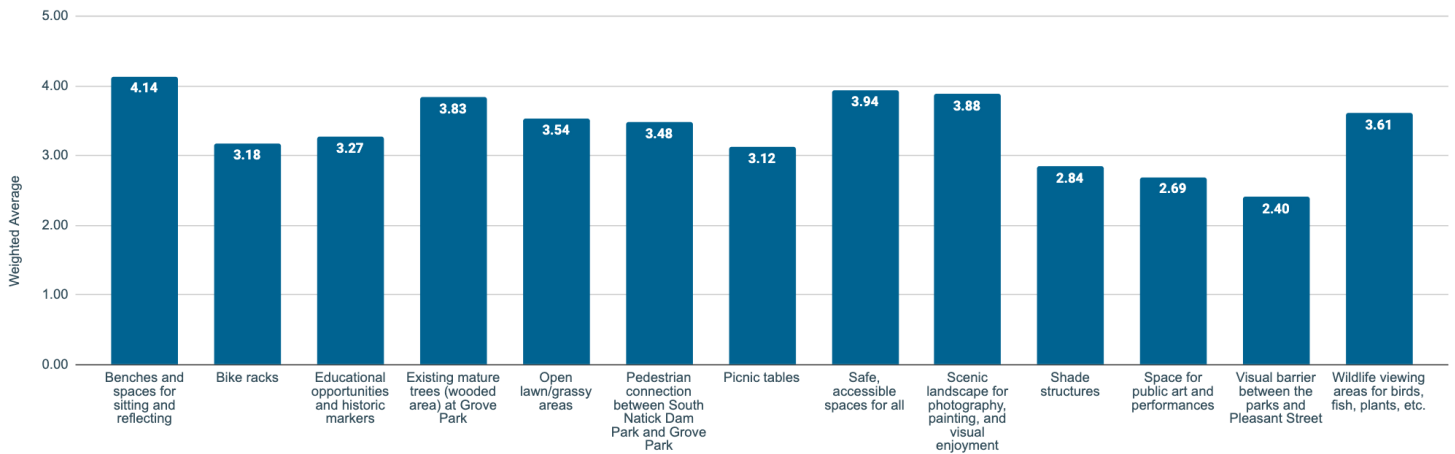


Q: If you were in charge, what features would you tell the landscape architect are important to include in their design in the South Natick Dam Park and Grove Park?

Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 841 responded to this question. Responses are broken out below by the 776 respondents who are Natick residents, including KMS students, and the 65 respondents who do not reside in Natick. Other comments/suggestions were shared by 69 respondents; a complete exported list of comments is available in Appendix B.

Responses from Natick Residents:

Natick Residents: In the South Natick Dam Park and Grove Park

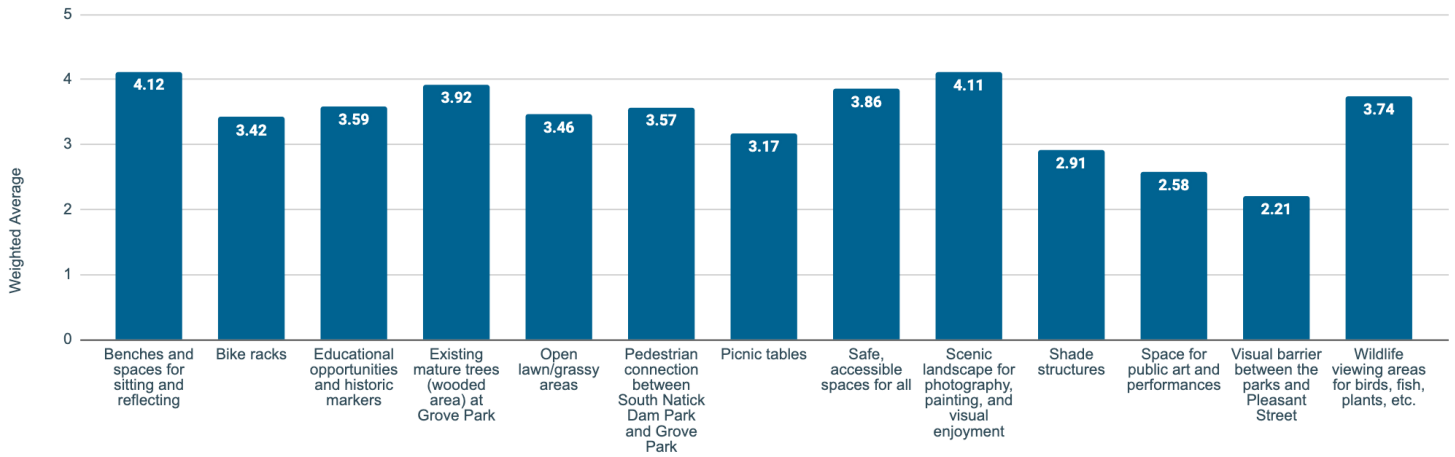


| Response | Not at all important | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important | Weighted Average |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Benches and spaces for sitting and reflecting | 18 | 34 | 105 | 282 | 335 | 4.14 |
| Bike racks | 54 | 158 | 246 | 203 | 99 | 3.18 |
| Educational opportunities and historic markers (e.g. interpretive markers, plaques) | 44 | 124 | 290 | 195 | 111 | 3.27 |
| Existing mature trees (wooded area) at Grove Park | 33 | 78 | 146 | 238 | 273 | 3.83 |
| Open lawn/grassy areas | 41 | 86 | 217 | 256 | 160 | 3.54 |
| Pedestrian | 42 | 112 | 207 | 245 | 160 | 3.48 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| connection between South Natick Dam Park and Grove Park | | | | | | |
| Picnic tables | 66 | 157 | 257 | 190 | 97 | 3.12 |
| Safe, accessible spaces for all (e.g., guardrails for children, ADA walkways) | 21 | 61 | 151 | 242 | 289 | 3.94 |
| Scenic landscape for photography, painting, and visual enjoyment | 16 | 64 | 183 | 233 | 270 | 3.88 |
| Shade structures (e.g., pavilion, gazebo) | 146 | 163 | 217 | 137 | 99 | 2.84 |
| Space for public art and performances (e.g., outdoor concerts, readings) | 144 | 213 | 218 | 117 | 74 | 2.69 |
| Visual barrier between the parks and Pleasant Street | 218 | 202 | 203 | 81 | 53 | 2.40 |
| Wildlife viewing areas for birds, fish, plants, etc. | 35 | 95 | 214 | 221 | 205 | 3.61 |

Responses from Non-Natick Residents:

Non-Natick Residents: In the South Natick Dam Park and Grove Park



Q: Do you have any additional thoughts to share with the Charles River Dam Advisory Committee?

Of the 980 individuals who responded to the survey, 382 responded to this question - 353 respondents who are Natick residents, including KMS students, and 29 respondents who do not reside in Natick.

A complete exported list of comments is available in Appendix C.

Appendix A: Additional comments/suggestions for features directly along or in the Charles River, upstream and/or downstream

Natick Residents:

- re-activate the canal
- Add more benches in this area
- Don't remove the beautiful dam.
- Concrete is UGLY
- Best environmental outcome
- Path along the river
- riffles will not create enough noise to drown out the car noise. Only the dam will do that. Removing the dam will take away the white noise of the water that drowns out all of the cars driving by. Removing the dam means this spot will no longer be as peaceful as it is now.
- Other recreation such as picnicking/playspace/benches
- All efforts should be made to retain such an iconic place.
- To the fullest extent possible restore native habitat
- No fishing would be preferable
- relaxing public access to the shady earthen dam section
- Don't spend a lot of money for Pretty
- the dam defines south natick
- Natural aesthetics (trees, etc.)
- VERY important for herons feeding below the dam
- A peaceful place to collect myself, watch sunsets reflect in water, etc.
- Important to avoid creating greatly reduced water levels, exposing areas of "low tide"-smelling sediment.
- more benches and seating area
- Habitat for wildlife
- Access for anadromous fish
- Public open space.
- an ecologically healthy area! extremely important
- scenic beauty of the dam.
- Natural area free of most manmade influence except an area for a kayak/canoe launch. No waterfall.
- Retain as much natural and historic beauty as possible, shade trees/shaded picnic area, spaced benches for ppl who can only walk short dist
- The intrinsic value, the beauty of this Landmark should not change
- Eco restoration using 100% native species, open-pollinated seed of local genotype
- Fourth question unclear - does this require spillway removal?
- I don't think the launch area needs to be the driving feature, but would be nice to have an area where you could launch in either direction if possible.
- keep the trees. need the shade

- specific points of access to deter trampling the natural ecosystem.
- I'd really like to see a kayak/canoe rental / equipper business on Pleasant St to make South Natick into a recreation hub.
- View of the river
- I know you'll do a great job!! Thanks in advance for your work!
- Keep the parking and the park area.
- Should not be overused, a quiet beautiful site.
- Good for bio diversity. As a resident living across the road from the river I am concerned about a drop in water level upstream
- Restoration of natural course of river, flood protection
- ecosystem benefits for top-predators (whihc implies all the way down the food chain:)
- Environmental impact on wildlife and flora
- Footpaths along the river both up and down the river, possibly all the way to Wellesley
- Space for passive recreation ie: benches, tables, etc. Extremely Important!
- A healthy, restored river ecosystem should be the top priority
- The relaxation factor is important to me
- There is nothing like a waterfall. A river is special. Rapids are special. But a waterfall is even more special. I need to learn more, but most things built a long time ago are built better than modern construction. It's hard to believe that the current gorgeous landscape is not well constructed. I don't believe that removing trees would strengthen/improve the structure. When you remove trees, you leave room for their roots to rot. Trees hold things together more than they tear things apart, I believe. But I do need to learn more. I cannot believe that any design will ever be as beautiful as the current condition. I do think a safety rail for children would be helpful but imagine it might either look too modern (eg glass) or block the view. Whatever you put in should look old, circa the same time period as the current dam and Bacon library. The current bridge also is gorgeous
- Thoughtful, useful and particularly beautiful landscape
- beautiful views, without lots of motorized and/or man-made buildings. benches, tables yes. Storage facilites for a boat launch, no. perhaps a natural ampitheater overlooking the water? improved walking pathways, native plantings. creative historical markers
- The falls should remain; otherwise it's just a river
- visibility of the river from the banks. Natural look
- ADA Title III
- natural rocky falls over granite ledge
- sitting areas that view the river
- Place to take out canoe at Grove Park (or elsewhere)
- Healthy riparian vegetation and navigable waterways for wildlife
- Picnic areas...more comfortable benches
- Visual experience from the park
- Observing wildlife as seasons change. Watching fishermen utilize this great fishery which is managed by Mass. Fish and Wildlife. Watching various water levels rise and fall all year round.

- Part of the So Natick look it is So Natick unusual more and more people want yo vhsge what made certain are
- Variable habitat for wildlife, e.g. marshy area, islands with trees or shrubs
- Maintaining this as an aesthetically attractive place.
- I would like to see paths along the river
- waterfront areas for sitting, picnic, playing, etc.
- Trees, shrubs, perennials, esp. native or wildlife supporting
- Picnic areas
- Natural area with large Pines as placeholders of history
- Views of the water and aquatics environment from public land
- Parking for people using the river
- shaded areas for sitting, picnics, walking
- have a nice surroundings
- N/A
- No
- A swimming area
- No pollution
- I do not have another reason
- no no
- none
- no
- There should still be a big grassy area for people to hang out and eat food.
- nice areas for people to sit and which in
- More important things to focus on are the wildlife and environment.
- open field where the trees are on the dam right now.
- area to have picnics
- Warnings of low-to-ground spots.
- Picnic tables are important.
- It has been around for almost a hundred years and it would be sad to see it gone.
- The history behind the dam
- Fishies safe = Extremely important
- none

Non-Natick Residents:

- Landscape with native plants
- The area should remain exactly as it is, it protects species of native plants and ecosystems, people don't need to change the park, the river is already
- viewpoints for photography, birding, aesthetics
- Navigable passage for this type of boat can be a portage (getting out of the water and carrying your boat to the other side of the falls)
- The Falls in South Natick is an iconic space that needs to be preserved and cared for so that families can take their children to picnic and spend time enjoying the natural habitat. As I

mentioned earlier the Fall represent a time capsule that takes us back to an idyllic time in which families spent time talking, remembering and sharing current ideas

- Flood Mitigation, clean electrical power generation, park restoration
- I'd like to see any paved walkways safe for visitors in wheelchairs. Right now the way the sidewalks are graded seems like a tipping hazard to me. If there is signage, I'd like it to be cohesive throughout the project. Most of all, I'd like the landscape architects be allowed to make things aesthetically pleasing.
- It's a beautiful spot, especially the impoundment the dam produces; breaching the dam will turn it into just another stretch of river
- safety - humans/pets, threats from cyanobacteria

Appendix B: Additional comments/suggestions for features in the South Natick Dam Park and Grove Park

Natick Residents:

- Don't remove our beautiful dam.
- Th
- Best environmental outcome
- Keep it natural! Plant lots of trees for natural shade! Also a fountain for people to fill their water bottles! Lots of trash cans!
- Anything that facilitates our enjoyment of this wonderful resource.
- Bridge walkway across river connecting to Natick bike path?
- Area can be improved by repairing and reinforcing the dam.
- Keep it simple and beautiful and not make it crowded with stuff and least of all cars
- Attractive, natural beauty, plus traditional architectural elements
- Again, go with the less expensive and most sensible plan
- VERY important for area for herons feeding below the dam
- this should be more accessibility connecting the dam and grove park
- Better integration between the parks and the Bacon Free Library property.
- opportunities for permanent public art
- I want what is best for the native plants & animals too.
- Keep the space natural and basic with cost factors strongly considered!
- Many parks have very large potted trees and gardens. Along the shore instead of fences narrow containers perennial gardens could cascade. The area could be beautiful
- Planting native trees for shade
- I think some type of a bridge/causeway could be created connecting the parks with built in benches allowing pedestrians to sit and gaze up/down the river...
- To support businesses in South Natick, I'd like to see somewhere where boaters could pull out, lock their boats, and then go to eat at the cafes on Eliot St. (Like the cafes along the Minuteman Bikeway.) That's why the pedestrian connection is important.
- All of these sound wonderful!
- Dog park with paths cut to access trail though high tension lines
- With regards to pedestrian connection between S Natick Dam Park and Grove Park, I think that improving the existing bridge and making sidewalks on both sides appropriately wide enough for people to pass each other while also having adequate space on the road for both cars and bikes would be great.
- Just rebuild it AS IT IS NOW ! Perfect as is !
- space for fishing from the banks or a dock
- River health is the most important!
- leave it as natural as possible
- Honor the historical and emotional impact of spillway - even if changed or removed
- Safe and accessible shouldn't combined. Accessible yes. Too many guardrails no. These are different issues.

- minimal structures; more for nature/animals, less for people
- Should the spillway be removed, I would strongly advise that a substantial but stylistically appropriate footbridge be constructed in its place. Visually and physically connecting the parks could be critical to the project's impact. Simulating the sound of the waterfall with riffle areas could help. The inclusion of one or more fountains could be considered.
- gazebo would be wonderful for photos
- On the Grove Park side, to me, it's very important to keep the feeling of visiting nature, more like we are guests there, with a more natural, less modified (still ADA compliant, just not busy with more man-made materials and building stuff and structures. Keeping the built up side more on the library side on the river. That way we have both kinds of areas. Would rather we keep the trees already there on the Grove side for shade and wildlife habitat, instead of installing man made shade structures. We love that side right now and would like to keep the feeling of less touched by humans. Add the human touches on the other side.
- Plantings/garden beds with a variety of native species
- Should look natural....low key
- Anything would be an improvement to the current condition. Roots are growing out of the ground, fallen trees are unsightly and dangerous. The small retention point and waterfall have become inoperable and overgrown. Brush is overtaking some of the banks in Grove Park.
- The current area is very small and has never been an attraction open to all residents. The nearby Elm Bank and Broadmoor preserves have all the features noted and Elm Bank allows access to all for free. I see no reason to spend town funds on landscaping this area once the dam is removed.
- Safe areas to drop off watercraft and park vehicles nearby.
- The trees are great but recognize that they need to go, with the dam.
- Trash cans outside the walls, shade trees, flower beds, artifacts, vistas, art, repaired walks, walls and steps. MAINTENANCE!!!
- public access to a historical site on the Charles River
- It should be 'wild' not constructed and accessible by walking/biking (NO CAR PARKING)
- walkways in general; PARKING
- I love watching the river
- No
- Designated Fishing Area
- Bird feeder
- no more fishing
- I do not have another reason
- no
- no keep it the same
- water
- A more important focus would be keeping the area safe for people and animals living in the area.

- place to swim in the dam.
- screen for shrek
- space to play sports
- what if we can swim in the river
- fishing area
- Field

Non-Natick Residents:

- Please don't denude Grove Park of it's trees!
- Leave it as it is it is a very small area in a small town center, Natick center has a gazebo and the neighboring Bacon Free Library has an open lawn area
- kayak/canoe launch
- Visual barrier to Pleasant Street could be a tall hedge (arborvitaes e.g.)
- In today's world we need a place to unwind and to taste a bit of our past. The world class Wellesley College is nearby which will bring people to visit our restaurants, hotels, and shopping centers which will increase tax revenue and the general prosperity of the town of Natick
- Extremely important -- Pond/lake preservation!!
- I'm against any structures. The area should remain naturalistic.
- new trees planted to replace existing trees, if no trees planted then shade structures will be more important.
- Mostly native plants landscaping
- Full fish passage in a free river

Appendix C: Additional comments/suggestions for the Advisory Committee

Natick Residents:

- The spillway gate should be repaired/replaced so that the water level can be seasonally controlled.
- More flowering bushes/plants.
- I would like to see peaceful places to sit and enjoy the river. Places for people to access the river by kayak, paddle board, canoe. A park type setting for families, but not a playground, maybe some small structures though for children to climb or swing. I would like to keep the spillway as it is soothing to hear the water as it splashes down. I love the wildlife that inhabits the area. (What would happen to our heron?) It's a special place for our residents and friends to relax and refresh their spirit.
- Please enhance the beauty through retention of the key aesthetics- falls, parkspace, viewing and seating. Upgrade it, modernize and leverage further for community events and education. Thank you for your efforts and asking for input! Jody Johnson
- I'm looking forward to seeing the renderings of what both options will look like. From an ecology/sustainability perspective, I am 100 percent in favor of the option to remove the dam. I believe removing the dam will help restore the connectivity and be a step in the right direction if decisions to remove any of the lower dams are made in the future. I also believe that removing the dam will restore the natural beauty of the river, a beauty that might be hard to envision, which is the reason that I am looking forward to seeing the renderings from the landscape architect. I also understand and respect the history and feelings that people have about the spillway, it's beautiful, I visit it frequently and truly enjoy spending time there, but believe that the area will continue to be beautiful and perhaps even more after the spillway is removed.
- Bring the river back to it's natural flow to help the fish and other wildlife.
- no
- Thank you for all of the work that you have been doing. This has been a very thorough process and I appreciate the transparency with which you have proceeded. All the of the resources on the website have been very helpful. Finally, I greatly appreciate the degree to which you are engaging the community in this process, particularly incorporating indigenous perspectives.
- "I have lived in natick for 58 years . 42 years in south Natick. I worked for most of the time teaching in two schools by the waterfall. It has been an important place to bring my students over the years. We would sit on the bank and talk about the history sketch and take in the beauty of our town. As a family it is a spot to relax ,reflect and kayaked. I now have a daughter who also teachers in a school across off Pleasant St. She also takes the young kids over for outside lessons or enjoys her lunch breaks listening to the relaxing waterfall. We have always marveled at how lucky to have such a gift right in our on Town.
- We hope it can be fixed, improved and continued to be enjoyed for many years to come. A stunning and joyful destination! 90 Woodland Street"
- The Charles River Dan has to stay

- I would not like it to become a new site for concerts and attractions as there is no area to park. It is currently a serene area and wildlife is more important than making a tourist attraction with added pollution, noise and wildlife disruption. The area at Belkin farm has that already covered. Keep this area more natural. One of the few beautiful, quiet, calm places in the busy, recently overly populated town of Natick.
- It seems appropriate to return the river to its natural flow.
- Please preserve this area. I've lived here for 32 years and it has been part of my life every day for that entire time.
- Keeping the existing aesthetic with mature trees in Grove Park is very important. It's uncommon to find a healthy grove of hemlocks these days. I support ecological restoration and allowing the river to follow its natural flow in this area without the dam.
- I would love to keep the area quiet and peaceful. I would prefer not to see a large parking lot adjacent to the park.
- I was born at LMH and have lived here in So. natick all my life of 83 yrs. Don't ruin our village by removing our dam. It's one of the most beautiful outdoor spots in Natick.
- Keep it the same. It is beautiful and calming g and peaceful ... no changes please
- Improvement and beautification of grounds: grass, flowers, flowering tress or bushes
- Preserving the existing beauty of the entire area and keeping it uncrowded is most important. Must maintain the old time beauty
- What is the conceptual capital estimate required for each design option?
- Let's do the right thing for the river and get rid of the dam. A river is beautiful on its own. No need for a man-made structure.
- This area is a Natick treasure. Every town resident is proud of this beautiful oasis. It would be criminal disrupt this lovely tranquil spot.
- Don't cut trees. No dogs. Peace and tranquillity
- Please don't get rid of the spillway, it's iconic to south natick, repair what is needed and make improvements elsewhere to the area but leave the iconic landmark intact for everyone to continue to enjoy.
- I would like to see more benches available for seating on the grove side of river.. also trash cans less noticable .. they take away the visual appeal where they are placed now.
- The dam should be upgraded to state specs and made even more enjoyable for everyone. Enjoying this wonderful dam does not mean we are destroying our environment.
- I would like to see the spillway preserved even if it means modifications to the Grove Park.
- Please please please! For future generations! Make it beautiful with natural landscaping! It has potential to be most beautiful natural site in Natick and indeed all of MetroWest!!Thank you for what you are doing to make it happen.
- If the spillway is removed, landscaping of the newly exposed areas upstream is very important.
- Please keep the dam. Removing it will take away the white noise sound it creates that drowns out the car noise. It's not going to be peaceful at this park anymore if the dam is removed because there won't be enough water noise to drown out all of the car noise. Sometimes some man-made things are worth preserving because of their beauty. This site

and that dam/waterfall are a destination in Natick. Kids and families especially love the waterfall. Please don't get rid of it. Plus, removing the dam will narrow the river and create a marshy and unattractive area far from the edges of the park. Removing the dam might also cause unforeseen changes to private property upstream and downstream. We could end up dealing with lawsuits from people whose property gets negatively affected by the dam removal. It's best to leave this dam alone and repair it and enjoy this beautiful destination in Natick.

- I have elaborated on the linear park aspect of South Natick in an earlier letter. Though I live downtown, I have worked in South Natick at Lookout Farm for 3 years and visit the park often; and memories about from 25 years in Natick. For me, the most important issue is to improve the pedestrian and cycling experience both within the park and accessing the park. The crossings over Pleasant Street bridge are dangerous. A connection independent of the bridge would decrease the number of people and families that experience that danger, increase the water views, and connect the linear parks of South Natick: Shaw Park, Bacon Free Library, South Natick Dam Park, Grove Park and the Baseball Fields. A well designed bridge would join the other two bridges we have in Natick as destinations. Whether the issue is still "dam" vs "spillway" or a convergence prevails, whichever decisions are made, pedestrian/cycling experiences can be improved. Lastly, let me just say that I appreciate and respect the ideas that anyone brings to this project and will take great interest in the visions that the consulting firms can provide to the committee and the town. Thank you, Jamie Magee
- I favor retaining the spillway and removing trees as necessary. An open, grassy, useable space at Grove Park would be a huge net benefit for the community.
- It is important that a tangible, visible history of this area in Natick continue to be available for non-commercial enjoyment and absorption through the generations. This is such a vital place of who we were as a town in the past and who we will be in the future.
- Absolutely against any change which will cause the flood plain to encroach further on my property (8 Merrill Rd) and that of my neighbors.
- Please do not destroy this area. Certainly sounds as though many non-residents will benefit financially from plans to alter a significant Natick space
- Save the dam
- I would greatly like the historical parts kept like the grist mill stones and other parts of old mills that may remain
- If this area is an attraction, where would people park or how to access the area?
- Thank you for all your hard work!
- This dam and it's location is a beautiful historic landmark that should remain the way it is for all to enjoy. I live near this dam and drive by it daily - other than being there myself, the best part of my day is when there are people all around and soaking in all of the beauty surrounding them. Please restore the dam... there is so much history to preserve.
- Where is the money coming from, and how much?
- If the dam would be removed I would be ok with that. I prefer to have the dam however it needs to fit in with the landscape. Please no concrete megastructure!!!

- The Dam is an important landmark in Natick.
- Natick is not unique in the need to explore options for aging dam infrastructure. Please look at other examples in New England and I think you will find that partial or complete dam removal is nearly always the best option for residents, environment and budget.
- Thank you for considering the thoughts of residents. Hopefully this will turn out to be a project that is a source of pride for the town.
- The spillway has been a Natick landmark since 1932, fix it and leave it there. It is an iconic Natick landmark. Stop investing in consulting to remove it and use that money to repair it.
- Remove the dam. Restore the river. Stop pumping money into an already area of town that has already received far more than it's fair share.
- Don't remove the spillway and dam before doing further research on the impact to the environment!
- Please do not demolish the dam
- Keeping the earthen dam and removing the spillway seems like the best option from this writers viewpoint.
- Please keep the dam. Thank you.
- My goals are to avoid needless dam maintenance and refurbishment costs and return the river to its natural channel, while preserving the space as a public park.
- As a Lifelong Natick resident, I really like the falls. They represent something so special to Natick. I believe the history and beauty of the falls should be preserved. Fix the dam please!
- Keep it the way it is
- Don't remove the dam. Help maintain the uniqueness and character that drove people to live in this town in the first place.
- This spot has often been inspirational to me. Also, I used to play ""Pooh sticks"" with children there (although we called in ""Moses in a Basket""). I enjoy the Little Lending Library Box there. This space is a Natick treasure. Thank you for caring about it in a thoughtful way.
- There are several schools and daycares that visit the park for educational purposes. It might be advisable to reach out to them on their opinions as well.
- The Dam is very important to the historical area. The Bacon Free Library, The Historical society, the church and the beautiful homes in the area. People come from all over to enjoy the peace and beauty of the area.
- If the dam is removed, what will need to be done with the exposed riverbed when the water level is lowered above the dam?
- Many people at Town Meeting noticed one of the plans had ugly cement barriers, more modern industrial looking, which did not fit the traditional architecture of the bridge and the surroundings. The waterfall is attractive, the pictures from the plans we were shown were not as much so. There is a traditional idyllic that we like in South Natick, it goes with stone walls and nature. It does not look like the Mass Pike under construction or a bridge overpass on the Mass Pike made out of concrete. We know whatever you do needs to be technologically correct, but we want it to look correct too.

- I would like to see a good plan without the dam and preserve the scenic beauty of the area and have a quality choice between keeping the dam and removing it. I do not want it just ripped out and wire grid work with rocks replacing it.
- I'm happy to see the dam removed.
- As there are fewer and fewer spaces like these, we are so lucky to have one. The impact of having a calming, natural, and beautiful refreshing space like this in Natick is beyond measure. Just driving by and enjoying the site briefly makes me feel at ease, if even for just a moment in my day.
- Whatever way the town decides to go, I just hope they maintain it better than they do now. The area is an eyesore and a disgrace. Draws many people yet gets minimal maintenance.....
- fix what needs to be fixed but leave the basic layout as is. Basically leave it alone as much as possible.
- Yes, people see the spillway as romantic but by restoring it and the dam, it doesn't actually protect anything and leaves the town open to lawsuits. Enough already.
- I would like to see an artist's rendition of what an alternative to the concrete dam - after it's taken down - would look like.
- I'm more worried about how these changes will affect nature and wildlife than people. I'm on the Charles River, kayaking, multiple times a week in all seasons. I wonder how much these changes and impacts have been studied. It seems to me it's pretty radical a change.
- Most important that the public have easy access to banks at both sides and preserve as many shade trees as possible. Preserve the historic dam.
- There was an idea for a bridge structure in place of the spillway which I support.
- if you rebuild the concrete wall you should consider a water powered generator. It would involve a structure to house it but it could be designed as a colonial structure, unless of course colonial structures are too Eurocentric, then you could put a pile of sticks and disguise it as a beaver dam. There is clean energy going to waste. Charles Cutaia
- It is a beautiful area and I think you need to do what is best based on climate expectations and maintenance requirements. I'm sure that how ever it ends up- it will be beautiful in a new way. Thank you.
- the water levels should remain as is
- Approve removing the dam and landscaping the parks to accommodate the changes.
- If there is a reasonable way to keep the dam I think that it represents the character of So Natick .. the sound of flowing water , the beauty of it is worth preserving Grove Park is underused and modification there which include taking down some large trees may actually be beneficial and crest a more inviting space for families to use . I appreciate the thoughtful approach the committee has taken in soliciting residents input . It is a sacred piece of land thank you .
- Remain as close to way it is now
- lots and lots and lots of people come to look at the dam. Have you polled those people over a year or several seasons?

- Can the water inlet behind the earthen dam be filled to shore the earthen dam leaving the existing trees? Then rebuild the existing dam?
- Build a structurally sound stone wall in front of the earthen dam similar to existing spillway area allowing pond access. Update the other side of the earthen dam for easier kayak carry over the dam. Utilize gazebos to replace shade lost by tree removal. Add low root raised garden shrubbery in area where trees have been lost. Install organic or architectuarally pleasant sound barrier along Pleasant street to reduce road noise. Groom and update park areas. Save one of the few features that puts South Natick on the map. Hashtag keep the pond.
- Let's keep this as much of a natural feature of nature as possible...an oasis of nature in an otherwise suburban community. And let's make non-motorized boat navigation possible down the length of the Charles.
- Save mature trees as much as possible, preserve the feeling and ambiance of this site, and keep in mind the history of the area. Gazebos and picnic tables aren't necessary, but keeping the millstones is.
- Refurbish the dam - but keep it basically intact
- Let's try to leave as much of the trees as possible! It's a great space, it just needs to be fully utilized and max out its potential for the folks in S. Natick!
- It is VERY important to have the area below the dam for birds to feed.
- At the end of my day, I find that sitting at the Dam and listening to the sound of the dam is very relaxing and important to me.
- The dam should be removed from an ecological standpoint.
- I want to keep the spillway. I love the sound of the water. I enjoy mill pond. I do not want smelly muddy marsh growing along my property. I enjoy our view and have strategically modified our home to capture the beautiful view. I am disappointed that a 3rd option was not presented. In addition, I get the impression a decision is already made despite all the meetings and surveys. I read an article from the Charles River Chamber and there was mention that Natick is one of the Communities removing their dam. As a tax paying resident who will be directly impacted, i do not feel our voice has been heard.
- What was the origin reason the dam was built? Has that goal changed, met or is no longer relevant?
- I drive by the overspill several times per month. It is visually beautiful. It would be nice to keep that but, the old growth trees are more important in my opinion.
- Get rid of the dam
- I think taking out the dam would have unintended consequences down the line. The water level wit rise down stream and it will turn into swamp land and the risk of flooding will be greater to those who live along the banks.
- I support the best environmental plans, while minimizing erosion and health impacts to businesses and residents, and providing an extension of the Bacon Library neighborhood public spaces for children and adults.
- I don't want to see the area over by Ma horticulture and the homes in that area flooded With the removal of the dam. You cannot guarantee that happening. I have known when we

have had a major rainy season that whole area south east of Pleasant Street flooded. It was a mess we cannot predict what mother nature will give us in the future as far as rainfall especially with the new environmental concerns

- Keeping the grove of trees across from the park is very important to me. A wide open, treeless expanse will be ugly, provide poor habitat, and be a less attractive area to visit. Thank you for all the opportunities to contribute input.
- Do neighboring towns (e.g., Dover, Wellesley) have any say in this decision, since Natick's actions would likely affect the ebb and flow of the Charles River as it passes through those communities.
- I'd like to see the dam removed. It poses a risk and is not friendly to the environment.
- Just ensure that it's a beautiful destination for all. There should be a mix of open and private space for adults and children to enjoy along with nice views and places to reflect.
- Prioritize non-human environmental healing.
- Play structure
- There is nothing wrong with the way things are now. There is no need to make any changes - this has been a beautiful space for many, many generations. Leave it alone
- We continue to strongly support repairing the damn. Not sure what you're getting at with these questions, hopefully our answers were helpful.
- This is such a special area for our family to visit in our neighborhood. We often feel there is not enough seating to sit and enjoy and area. Please add more seating.
- I think we should remove the dam for many reasons. Thank you for working on this project.
- The most important thing to me is habitat for wildlife, especially birds
- The South Natick Falls are the South Natick FALLS. Keep the falls.
- Such a wonderful historic spot in Natick! Let's keep it as a preteen visiting and viewing location!
- This is a great opportunity to enhance and support the wildlife in and around the Charles River. I greatly support efforts to provide up and downstream access for river wildlife, as well as maintain and enhance adjacent native plant life that support the river ecosystem.
- The dam is an unnecessary burden to the town and to the Charles River. It celebrates merely a superficial component of our industrial heritage. There is far more to South Natick.
- Maintain adequate flow for canoe/kayak access both upstream and downstream on the Charles no matter what. the ultimate resolution.
- This is a beautiful space as is, and my opinion would be to keep it as intact as possible right now. This is an area that works for so many parties right now, I would hate to see changes in what is obviously (and universally considered) a beautiful public area. There are so few spaces like this anywhere in Metrowest, it would be a shame to see its existing beauty and tranquility disturbed. If I were making the decision, I would choose to fix the existing dam and to carry on with the space as-is.
- Fix the dam dam. I've been going here my whole life. The people who want to destroy it, don't even live here.

- Integrate the Bacon Free Library property with the parks. They are one contiguous parcel for public use, although with different ownership. They should be designed in relation to one another.
- I'm in the dam can go section. It's pretty but, we can live without it. Lifelong Natick resident.
- One thing that I find frustrating is that there is no engineering rendering of what the area would look like with the dam removed. I have paged through the materials and while there are references in certain of the presentations, I was not able to find anything readily available. I think the average person is not able to effectively visualize what the natural course of the river would be with the spillway removed. I think many people who support the dam removal will be surprised to what degree the area will change when the spillway is removed. I think concrete renderings of both options are essential to informed decision making.
- Do not remove the dam!
- Natick has lost a lot of mature trees to development. Natick has also seen increased paving. The result of tree loss and more pavement is increased average temperature. The tree cover at the South Natick Dam is an important resource worth protecting and I would like tree health to be a key consideration in the decision process.
- Those "mature trees" in Grove Park seem to be mostly white pines which I wouldn't miss.
- I love this area and have grown up feeling a special connection to it. Whatever decision is made, I'd hope the natural beauty elements, welcoming environment, access for all types of activities are kept. This is a visual landmark in Natick that is special and feels like home. I'm excited to see how it evolves in order to be safer and environmentally harmonious.
- I am a avid kayaker and wanted to know if any thought was to make the dam a whitewater park. It has been done in many other locations and helps with environmental benefits and can help with economic growth. Plus it's fun to watch the kayakers in the water.
- Open vistas able to go smoothly from upstream to downstream areas to view natural settings green spaces areas for resting and enjoying the pleasant views
- I would like to see an outcome that respects the indigenous people of the area and the ecology of the river. We have the opportunity to do the right thing for future generations. Let's not screw it up because of nostalgia for a man made waterfall.
- I think that dam should be removed and river allowed to return to its natural flow
- I have not kept up with the current options but would love to keep the visual/audible features of a "waterfall". There is something meditative about the sound and sight of falling water that people can sit and stare at while lost in their thoughts. It provides some present mindfulness that everyone needs. It would be nice if the area was safer for little ones as the rock wall along the water's edge is damaged.
- Thanks for this inclusive public process! I am interested to see the results.
- I would like the most ecologically friendly solution to be implemented.
- The South Natick Dam should be removed. The area should be restored to the way the Indigenous people cared for the land. The Ecosystem will be given a chance to recover.
- It is critical that the dam be preserved and repaired, not removed.

- Let's restore the river to its natural state. There is no other place in Natick where you can access the Charles. It is a beautiful spot and a free flowing river will be just as beautiful, if not more. It's also heartbreaking to think that the Town would directly against the wishes of the Native American representatives. When we say we care about equity and lifting up the voices of marginalized people, we need to walk the talk. Just because our experience is different (or our desire to preserve something nostalgic to us) doesn't mean we are in the right.
- Y'all misspelled extremely throughout the survey
- What is best environmentally is what I prefer.
- Recognize it is difficult to balance all of these competing desires and needs- at some point planners might ask some forced choice questions about needs/desires, when it will be clear we can not accommodate all items.
- Good luck with the process!
- The area is beautiful now. I would love to see the park areas maintained or expanded, regardless of the spillway decision. If the spillway is removed, the walls will no longer be along the river, so the whole area may need redesign. Thank you for giving this so much consideration, and for inviting so much public input.
- This is probably the most beautiful spot in Natick. I hope the scenery is treated as an important aspect. Like many people I only occasionally have an opportunity to visit, but anytime I drive by, I'm proud my town has such a pretty spot.
- If the dam is removed, what will happen to the wetlands the wild life above the dam?
- Basketball court, pickle ball court or skate park would be great.
- Native American lands acknowledgement/possible return/reconciliation to local tribes for ceremonial purposes and learning center.
- I feel that only directly adjacent residents use this - there really isn't much there for people in other parts of town to travel to.
- I've been going here since I was 2. Please do what you can to keep the trees/shade from the hot summer sun. A grassy lawn takes a lot of water and we have the town common for sitting in the sun. I'd go to this spot to get rest from the sun with an iced tea & a book from the Bacon library in the summer. It would be nice to have some more benches/places to sit. I'd also love to have a spot to put a kayak in there. Sustainability is key. Remove the spillway and go back to the natural habitat.
- there should be a land acknowledgement and contextual explanation of how the land of the Nipmuc people was dispossessed
- I'm interested in having a nice place for families to enjoy the outdoors. I'm also opposed to spending town's budget on fixing/repairing the dam. I would prefer returning the space to its pre-dam nature.
- Please keep in mind tax impacts as the town homeowners face exponentially increasing taxes and no relief in the near future. With inflation so high costs in town are going to rise let's keep expenses as low as possible. The money is better spent for schools and needed resources like the DPW. Get rid of the Dam, bring back a simple natural area without anything except an area to drop a kayak or canoe. Even having a landscape architect is a

waste of funds it should be part of the RFP process (if needed at all). You aren't going to make everyone happy and that's ok. Just because someone is the loudest in their complaints doesn't mean they are right. Be ok with hurting peoples feelings with facts and figures it's all part of the process and what you volunteered for.

- Dam is manmade. Return area to nature and usefulness for recreation.
- This location is a real hidden gem, but one that could be more highly publicized by Natick if the river became more accessible in terms of recreational activities. For years, I've kayaked at other locations because while beautiful, this area has no real good access. Since there were no questions in the survey to ask this, I'd also mention a current lack of parking. Sure, you can park on the main roads, but having even a medium sized dedicated parking area would be able to bring more enthusiasts to the area.
- Don't modernize it for the sake of coming into compliance. People go to this area of Natick to escape Rt9. I want to be reminded of how our town looked before the advent of industrial commerce, before the need to 'create' spaces for reclusion. This space is already wonderful and that should be the prime intended outcome.
- Please keep the style historically in keeping w Bacon Lib, pay honor to Natick's past. Not overly developed looking, but naturally beautiful like Elm bank's riverside paths. Easy upkeep, native plants, disturb as little of the natural habitat as possible. Thank you
- Beautification. Improve basketball/ share area. More seating. More plantings. Rebuild dam.
- The most important thing is appropriate conservation of the natural area and community access. This space matters because it is walkable access to nature for many residents. With other amenities nearby it supports placemaking in South Natick. I don't support spending money because people don't want change (i.e. it is acceptable if the waterfall is no longer there!). Another consideration is how to integrate these spaces with bacon free and the park across the street/next to the coffee and ice cream shops. With some creativity we could have a beautiful multi-purpose community destination. The old school building given up by Riverbend is also not too far away - is there a scenario in which this building might also be included?
- Please consider the health of the river - it's at least as important as human recreational uses.
- I would love to see this area turned into a more family-friendly park with play structures, areas for live entertainment, picnic areas, walkable paths, and a kayak/paddleboard area launch. I am also in favor of keeping the dam, as it is a staple in Natick.
- Let's do what's best for the environment while considering input from Native Americans. This could be an amazing project for a landscape architecture firm that is committed to eco restoration and highlighting the many layers of history on the site, particularly that of Native Americans. Perhaps we could consecrate the new park to the Praying Indians who were sent from the town to the concentration camp in Boston Harbor. Maybe a statue/Memorial to them? Connect the park with the grounds of the Bacon Library, the Eliot Church, the cemetery and the park across from the Bacon Library. This could be an amazing public space! As a landscape designer who lives on Woodland St, I am very excited about it.

- I live off Glen. I want minimal construction off Glen/Pleasant. I can't deal with that street intersection with construction for a very long period of time as in the morning it's backed up
- Please do what is best for the river (remove the dam). The presentation by the Natick Nipmuc was especially compelling on this point.
- I think it is very important to remove barriers for animal/fish movement in and along the river.
- Mainly, I would like to see the dam and the spillway repaired and retained.
- Aesthetic qualities & human values are vastly undervalued in the reports (versus budget costs & safety liabilities). The dam is an integral part of Natick's natural beauty & public appeal. There is also insufficient info re possible wildlife & water quality effects in the reports.
- Remove the spillway.
- The spillway is a town landmark that I would really like to maintain. It's a place for families to gather, for friends to meet, for kids to play, and for folks to take photos of significant events/dates.
- The views of the river from the parks are a perennial photography (and other art) opportunity. The open water above the dam has for many years been part of countless engagement photos, family photos, wildlife photos, etc. And of course many people enjoy the park for the view, whether or not they take an image on their various devices. That appeal is a treasure for residents and visitors alike. I bet it's part of the reason people live here. I'm not sure how that visual appeal would be kept if the spillway is removed, but either way please try to preserve the unique attraction that this vista offers to the public.
- Good luck. Thanks for doing this.
- Please keep the beauty of the area and not increase the traffic in our area!!
- I am so excited as this "space" has the opportunity to be THE signature site of Natick. There is no other spot in town that offers more recreational, social, environmental, even spiritual potential for this town. I am proud that the town saw fit to solicit feedback to inspire the landscape architects. I can't wait to see their ideas!!!
- Kayak put in spots
- Thank you for such a well-considered process to inform us of the issues and possibilities. We live "up-river" on the river so the decisions matter.
- The kids in Natick need more things to do. Like fishing and boating and etc. Let's try to keep them off drugs with more things to do!
- I just moved to Natick in October and the South Natick Dam Park played no small part in my decision. I attended Eliot Montessori 20 years ago and would visit the park every day before school with my Mom. This entire area is very dear to my heart and I'd be crushed if its central elements were changed, unless they were to fix something causing environmental harm. I hope to bring my kids to this park one day so they can sit on the benches and watch the river just as I did.
- To maintain the historic look by recreating the large stone walls that are already there

- The ""Community Use"" concept flies in the face of the Indigenous People's ""Honor the River"". Take the spillway down, and let us attempt to give back the dignity of the land to the legacy of the first inhabitants. That is truly the only signage required. How much more and how much longer must we manipulate what isn't ours and, pretend it is our right to do so?
- The river is a very lovely place to enjoy kyaking and canoeing - the perfect family adventure
- Wondering if there is a way to harness hydropower . If the generator can be aesthetically housed in a small footprint and incorporated into the antiquity of the current landscape. I'm sure costs could be outrageous, but it's crossed my mind.
https://www.siemens-energy.com/global/en/offerings/power-generation/power-plants/small-hydro-power.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiAq7COBhC2ARIsANsPATHsChCNGNEp6yJNIZ6raZOn7Y8sDSqR0u3qTc1n1GYOh7ZDNLTwAKQaAq0iEALw_wcB
- This is such a special place. Thank you for taking the time and listening to our input.
- The look and feel of these areas, imperfect and accrued over time, is what is special and a treasure. Do not turn this into an engineered/slick/organized shiny new thing.
- The restoration of the banks is a very important visual aspect. The newly exposed banks should be vegetated not ugly rip-rap slopes.
- The dam should remain & water levels of existing should remain as is.
- There is already a lot of traffic in the area. Space for events will create more traffic and congestion for the area. Also, if access to recreation is added/improved, it will be a waste of resources unless it is designed to be easily maintained. Grove park, river access, and the basketball courts (outside the scope of the project) are virtually unused and left to deteriorate.
- I would like to request the minimal removal of trees along the banks if the river and in the adjacent grove to the left if the dam.
- Return the river to the way it was before the spillway. Just have areas for people to hang out by the river and get into the river and utilize the natural resource.
- Please repair the dam. The dam is an icon for south Natick and should be repaired. Thank you!
- Just the river flowing unobstructed.....spillway removed
- Areas around south natick are currently not dog friendly. A park with trails cut along the River for dog walking would be a huge bonus for South Natick residents to allow their dogs freedom to run free.
- Remove the spillway and keep the dam as is
- Preserving the spillway if possible.
- Thank you for all that you do!
- A "natural" river with access to the water for boating, viewing, and quiet enjoyment of this special place.
- Maintain spillway and remove trees that are compromising the dam and replant/landscape park
- That the existing wild life would remain a priority.

- Sunny open space with easy access to the river for canoe and kayak launching and exit.
- Please do not destroy this historical landmark.
- An area where people can enjoy some quiet meditative time, where canoes/kayaks can access the river, where families can enjoy picnics and the beauty of the river.
- If there overall environment of the river and it's environs are improved by removing the damn, remove the damn! and if the tax payers of Natick benefit from the removal, all the better...
- I kayak every weekend possible. We must create a boat launch. Access to the water is critical for fishing.
- I think that the dam should be removed and the river restored to a free flowing stream. My firm belief is that if the town does a good job managing the area around the river that people will soon adapt to the changed nature of the area. A free flowing river can be as beautiful, or more so, than the current dam and impounded water.
- Mature trees and places to enjoy the scenery are the most important.
- Removal of the dam is important for restoring the river ecosystem and facilitating the natural movement of aquatic species along the river, particularly endangered species like the American eel. This is an opportunity to put environmental concerns above mere aesthetic sensibilities.
- It would be heartbreaking to take away the spill way and vastly change the area . As a resident of over 40 years it has always been a sanctuary spot for me and my family.
PLEASE !
- I've lived in Natick since 1958, first East Natick, then South Natick and went to NHS. An Environmental Engineer (retired), my hope is the dam can survive without removal. Would love to see a low visibility energy capture device as part of the dam and launch access above and below for canoes & kayaks along with a continued fish ladder.
- Do not turn the area into a recreation for all overused park. Just rebuild the dam-spillway as it is now. No need to make a big extravaganza here. Just keep it simple !
- How will this affect upstream water levels? Especially in dry summers?
- I don't think the repair of the stem should be a high priority for our town given that we just close an elementary school in an effort to save money
- I would love to join if possible!
- Not at this time.
- This area is such an important asset for the town. I've lived in South Natick since 1977, and my late husband's family has lived in South Natick since 1920. I want to see it become even more accessible and beautiful and vibrant. I love the park!
- dont forget the birders and the fishers
- keep as natural as possible, it should be convenient for users to pack out what you pack in.
- I grew up on Glen St just around the corned & so could walk to the park as a child. While the dam was an iconic part of my childhood, wildlife & cultural concerns and needs seem more important than restoring/repairing the dam.
- Please keep the dam

- Thank you for engaging in a thoughtful process! I hope the best environmental decision will be reached and people's emotions (eg, warm fuzzies about the dam) will not drive the decision
- I have been a resident of South Natick for 55 years on and off and have found the spillway (specifically) to be an important, iconic, unique attraction to our area for recreation and contemplation of beauty. It would be a terrible shame to lose this landmark because the town allowed trees to grow too large on the earthen dam (these are not "old growth" trees -- they're just overgrown trees) and made it vulnerable. I would like the town to work to get infrastructure money from the federal and state government to restore and reinforce the dam so as to preserve our iconic spillway. I believe townspeople would be willing to pay for the ongoing maintenance of the dam via our tax dollars. Please find a way to preserve this site.
- Not knowing the elevation change, would be nice to have the river flow down and through a series of natural rocks of different sizes, maybe with random mini green spaces in amongst the rocks.
- Trees, native plants, seating, some kind of public toilets.
- I would like to see improved connectivity between green areas (dam, Broadmoor, Elm Bank) for pedestrians and cyclists
- This is our Eiffel Tour.
- The BBall court area on Pleasant street has been shamefully neglected for the entire 25 yrs I have lived here. Rehabilitation program and enhancement of that area must be considered at the same time as these other issues. They should be considered contiguous recreation spaces and maintained at the same level at all times. Views of the river or its tributary are adjacent to the courts, and should also be made more prominent. Grove Park has also been quite neglected for decades and has appeared to be the sad step-child of Dam Park. Our other parks and playgrounds in town are in much, much better shape which is super frustrating. I am in favor of removing the spillway, but in a more thoughtful way than was initially presented. There must be more than one option for what a post-dam scenario might look like. I am glad to see that citizens concerns in this vein are being recognized now. Thanks
- It would be great if this was connected to other walking trails.
- While access is important and having amenities is great, I'd like to see the town focus on preservation of the natural state of the area (including dam removal long-term). Over development and high volumes of foot traffic risks environmental degradation of the land and river banks (erosion, etc). Do not let this space become a mini lake Cochituate (mdc) area. Make this a preserve with minimal amenities; a natural space.
- I really encourage you to prioritize ecosystem restoration in this process.
- I think the prudent thing to do is to remove the dam. And make sure we plant lots of trees.
- Everything should look old and graceful. Nothing should look too modern. There should still be a waterfall. There should be the mature trees and private outdoor spaces of Grove park, from which one can look back across the waterfall at the island in the middle of the river and the mill pond and at the Bacon Library beyond. The Bacon Library might be the

most beautiful building in the world. Its setting might be the most beautiful in the world, on both banks of the river and the island and everywhere in between. Please keep it that way. The millstone is also a nice feature, connoting the mill that was once there. Perhaps you can add a better sidewalk on the street with the bridge without altering the bridge much. The bridge is beautiful. A modern design would not be nearly so beautiful.

- The Pine trees in Grove Park are no loss if removed. Actually they should make room for a better planned park (see species in Shaw Park). Grove park can be the access to the river, fishing, sports (some parking needed) while others side is more for sitting. Performances should be in Shaw Park - flat surface. Too loud for acoustics near water. The spillway makes a perfect picture and should stay for the future. I'm sure there's a way to beautify it and around. Don't forget to include the basketball court down the road which is in desperate need of repair. I heard this used to be flooded in winter for ice skating. Sounds wonderful. So this area is a Charles side run off not in use - why?? Sounds like the culvert could be helpful during rain storms. Hmmm?
- Thanks for asking our opinions. It's a lovely place to sit and talk, have a picnic or snack, or just enjoy nature so please make sure there are plenty of spots for that. A walking trail for the kids with signage that points out the types of trees/plants/nature (walking trails for kids to use/explore).
- keep as many trees as possible and take the dam down.
- Solution must deal with projected impacts of climate change and potential for disastrous flooding.
- Dam should be removed so as to be as it was prior to being built.
- Save the DAM!!!!!! and its fish ladder. Nothing to be done until all the lower dams have fish ladders!!!
- What are you going to do about the abandoned tennis/basketball court!
- Keep the trees!
- Because it is such an iconic and loved space the parks need to be carefully designed to be both dramatically beautiful, well maintained and peaceful
- Thank you fir your service!
- On balance I think it would be best to remove the dam.
- Splash pad would be great!
- Remove the dam in order to restore the natural flow of the river.
- Inclusion of Native American information. OK with a small gazebo or pavillion but not a large, super noticeable structure. Perhaps a shade structure such as the one at Navy Yard...trees, shrubs should be the focus, not so much imposing enclosed structures. THANK YOU for the transparency and caliber of work being done! It's truly appreciated!
- Real landscape work is likely to be deemed too expensive by those that believe that landscape just happens and believe tossing down some grass seed is doing landscape work. Don't be afraid to retain the top tier design team(s) necessary to deal with a complicated problem in order to be sure that a space worthy of our town and this river is realized. The cost in the end will pale in comparison to what it can bring to our community and the lives of our citizens.

- I think that whatever is the best for the health of the environment and nature, whatever that is, should be done with the dam, even if it means dismantling the dam 🙄 😐
- minimal development. Leave as open space; keep trees. Don't displace wildlife. People should be able to enjoy nature but not by partying or pick-nicking or buying stuff at art exhibits etc. Just nature.
- I really hope the town is able to remove the old dam and allow for the river to flow naturally. It would greatly improve enjoyment of the river if the upstream and downstream parts of the river weren't cut off by the dam.
- In general, restoring the river to as close as possible to its original natural state should be the objective. Passive recreation is also appropriate as long as no major infrastructure is needed.
- The area is really great the way it is now. Don't rush to change it. Leave it as is for as long as possible... we could wait for Years! I know that ODS requires something be done eventually but not now.
- Restore river to its 'ordinal' state, remove the dam and keep the area as natural as possible. Maintain natural barrier between Pleasant street rising traffic and the river
- I recommend more accessible and functional (during low and high water) boat launches. If the spillway remains, then both above and below the dam to facilitate pass through river travel. Some effort to accommodate low water travel by creating a channel could be helpful as well.
- I am in favor of free flowing rivers and while the dam's history is interesting, the earthen dam will forever be a liability. I am in favor of a foot bridge joining the two parks once the dam is removed and once the silt exposed by Grove park, it be dredged back to the park to both expand and secure the land there. The water level would be lowered substantially there.
- Do not remove the Dam!
- I would enjoy having a clear route to portage my kayak and/or canoe over Pleasant Street
- It's nice to have input, Thank you for asking!
- Thank you! The first two proposed options were HORRIBLE, so I'm grateful that you are going back to the drawing board. Also, I'm very concerned about potential flooding for Water/Lincoln/River Streets if dam is removed.
- A big draw of south natick is the spillway and retained pond area. What a shame if we lost this. For public art and music space, we already have that in the library. Willows are beautiful, fast growing trees that could be planted. I don't feel the preservation of giant white pines as important. maples, willows, other attractive trees would be better.
- Please remove the dam and restore the river. Preserve the beautiful grove of trees by the river. Do something creative but don't overpower the natural beauty by overbuilding.
- Yes. Leave the Dam alone.
- It would be great to restore this to a natural run of the river with some sitting areas (maybe a few more than currently exist) to enjoy the area. I'm a resident in the village and we enjoy the space immensely but wouldn't be sad to see the spillway go. It's also a great space for local youth who love to fish! Please don't take that away. It's such a rare find these days and

bodes well for helping to develop an awareness of ecological issues. This area should NOT be turned into a massive picnic area where people will spoil the area with trash, noise and feeding the wildlife. Please focus more on a reflective, natural preserve area.

- Safe parking near canoe put-in on Eliot St.
- Keep up the good work on educating us on the goings on and asking for our insights.
- Please don't spend the money to pretty up the dam. From what I understand, it won't prevent floods or damage. Let's go with the least expensive and least intrusive method.
- Keep the dam.
- Please restore the river so that it can be beneficial to wildlife again!
- As a downstream resident of the "riverbend" community, we want to ensure that both scenarios speak to our neighborhood concerns regarding flooding, increased recreational use, etc. (particularly motorized)
- Eliminating the dam is the right decision ecologically and will improve both aesthetics and recreation. I am strongly in favor of this vs. restoration. JO
- The expanse of water and spillway are very pretty, and should not be eliminated. 100 years of wetland vegetation and wildlife will be destroyed. It amazes me that I cannot work on my back yard, which is within 100' of the wetlands without permits from the Wetlands Commission and the DEP, but the Town of Natick is proposing to drain acres of wetlands. Hypocrites.
- Dams are harmful to aquatic ecosystems and raise water temperatures in addition to water temperatures rises caused by climate change. Downstream macroinvertebrate communities will thank you for removing this dam.
- Hoping they do Not remove dam. It is a source of calm and peaceeven just to stop car and open window for a little while.
- Whether a dam is in place or not, the Charles is underutilized by Natick. It's not as accessible or scenic as we could make it, so I'm hoping this process helps create a showcase for both the Charles and Natick.
- a healthy ecosystem!
- I think including a substantial public history component in the redesign of the park would be a welcome and important contribution. The history of the site with respect to Native American and colonial history is a history that needs to be better recognized. This would primarily take the form of more extensive and better signage. The Charles River has no navigable rapids nearby. I think designing the current dam site to have a substantial riffle - Class II in whitewater parlance would be aesthetically attractive, acoustically pleasing, and fun for people who like to canoe and kayak on something other than still water. It could potentially be done such that the area remains navigable for other kayakers and boaters who aren't interested in a riffle. Thanks to those on the advisory committee and town government who have invested so much time in such a thorough decision-making process.
- I would love to have the dam and spillway remain. It is a lovely place that I would hate to lose. There are so few special spots in the area today. We should do everything in our power to keep it

- Please leave the spillway as is. If the park has to have the trees removed and replaced with rip rap, it might present the town with a new opportunity to maintain a newly landscaped area deserving of this hidden jewel in Natick. This area is falling into disrepair and that is a crying shame as it is visited by hundreds of people from neighboring towns from many generations. The stonewalls are crumbling, rooted trees and weeds have taken up residency in these damaged areas and the bituminous walkway is being uprooted. This reflects on us as a community. Let's restore it to its old glory. Once it's gone, it's gone forever. I grew up near this area and still spend a considerable amount of time fishing there and notice these needed repairs. Don't turn the Charles River into the Charles Stream! It will not be the same. Thank you for your time and consideration. You have some tough decisions to make
- Save the trees, make the park delightful, have a water feature, restore the river, save money.
- Fix the problem and leave the dam and the area the way it is
- I would like the dam removed. I do not think town time and resources need to be spent on this issue any longer.
- The iconic waterfall that we pass everyday is spiritually renewing to all who see it. It is so special. And those of us who have the privilege of abutting the River have great concerns about changes that would occur to the width and flow. We don't feel adequate research has been done to date about the true affects of removing the spillway. Please consider solutions that let the spillway remain-thank you.
- I'd like to see the dam removed for ecological and recreational reasons. However it would be cool to have something that serves as a reminder of it, perhaps some boulders on the edges the water spills over
- I don't favor over doing this, and think that South Natick has plenty of green space as compared to the rest of the town, which needs our resources and budget a lot more than this area. I am not opposed to making this area nice, but with all due respect, I am very concerned that this project is going to be the pet project of interested persons who live right there, and not be in tune with the town needs as a whole. Come over to West Natick please and get us some more trees, less pavement.
- While there are potential benefits from removing the spillway, this spot is considered by countless residents and visitors to be one of the most beautiful spots in New England, if not the nation. Do the benefits really justify losing this?
- Thank you for your efforts.
- I would love to see river and wetland viewing areas, paths, riffles/rapid to walk along, AND to paddle through!! I see this as opportunity to create a beautiful outdoor space and a real asset to the town.
- This is one of the most beautiful areas around; it needs to be upgraded, designed and maintained as such
- Maintain and enhance nature and minimize man made features.
- I feel it's very important to preserve the spillway of the "iconic south Natick waterfall" as well as keeping trees near pleasant street

- Thankyou for your work!
- Very well designed areas that balance access and safety and connect to the surrounding properties.
- Good luck with the work. No matter what you do, you're going to make people angry - I don't envy you.
- I like going to the park with my 2 year old, it's nice to have a place to watch the animals and ducks, and sit and eat a snack from one of the local businesses. My husband likes to fish, but I don't think he's done it at that location.
- Don't let the insurance industry dictate development or use of assets of the community. They will stifle any use that goes against their profit mission. i.e. cut down the trees before they fall on something that they might have to pay for. Don't pay for the insurances hazard reduction. They don't need help to save their bottom lines \$\$\$\$\$\$ Keep the area's trees and do minimal damage to the existing beauty.
- Get rid of the dam, not worth the cost to keep it
- Take it down, save as many trees as possible, encourage walking/biking and make automobiles as inconvenient as possible.
- It is most important to me that the dam be removed to allow the river to return to its natural state.
- would like to see the dam repaired, the old trees cut down, nice grassy area for families to picnic on, enjoy the sound of the river, beautiful flowers, no trees, nice place to put a blanket down and read and bring people together to enjoy each other and see the beautiful Charles. This would build community.
- Restoration of a free-running river and the possibility of fish navigating this section of river is very important. A second goal (with the realization that the river-scape will change) is providing excellent access for human-powered watercraft and excellent portaging access around any rapids. At the present time, Landing and Launching from the existing dam would be acceptable for a wilderness location, but is not up to contemporary standards for civilized park setting.
- To keep in mind the input from Indigenous peoples.
- I would like the area to remain uniquely beautiful A place which attracts people and wildlife alike A place to enhance our area But also remain one of a kind and special Hopefully that will be possible If the dam is removed: I will greatly miss it as a place i visit and admire frequently
- I think it's fine to go back to its natural state; remove the spillway.
- It's important to do the responsible things - from a ecological and fiscal perspective. Remove the dam/spillway. Restore the river to a more wild, undamed state. Eliminate the risk and dam costs. Stop pumping so much money into South Natick amenities - there are other parts of town.
- Money can better spent on the area than maintaining a same that has outlived its purpose
- Could a small but nice playground be added with no woodchips but grass? Maybe, add some bathrooms in some areas.
- nope

- ur mom
- no.
- NO
- No
- No but I do think you should cut it down but don't harm any animals that live there.
- please do not take down any trees.
- I think this project should focus a great deal on how it can benefit large issues all over the world like pollution, extinction, and the overall problem of climate change.
- Yes, to not pollute the river and do not do anything to it that is harming the environment
- Not really. I do love listening to waterfalls and waves, and there is pretty peaceful when the waterfall and ripples are moving.
- No
- no
- No
- I think it is nice, but could be made a bit nicer.
- no
- I do not.
- no
- no
- no
- no
- We should either add another baseball field or a theme park on it.
- I think there should be a six flags next to the waterfall.
- no
- no
- I don't have any additional thoughts.
- No.
- No, nothing is coming to mind.
- no
- no
- keep it the same as it is know.
- The spillway should stay, this is because people have memories here that they want to keep. People have wedding photos, fishing stories and summer memories. Keep the South Natick Dam, and repair it.
- good luck :)
- I think the best solution for the dam is to restore it back to its original state while still making it feel cozy and nice like the waterfall did. So changing it but changing it to much.
- No
- no
- No
- i would very much like to keep as many of the old trees as we can during construction
- Nope

- Fishing doesn't matter at all, it is the most boring thing in the world. We should ban it from Natick. #savethefish #fishingisb
- They are trying their best. the guy who says fishing deos not matter, is wrong its fin
- no
- make it a football feild
- no thank you but keep the dam!
- we should help people in our communities.
- The river is part of my back yard, it has been there for as long as I can remember, and that makes the river important to me, but nothing will stop me from doing whats right.
- I think we should repair the dam because it is something super important to Natick in my opinion.
- not really
- no
- I do not have any additional thoughts to share.
- I personal live right off the dam and having to take kayaks, canoes, etc... out of the water and walk them up the hill and paddle away is a hassle and to be able to paddle right across would be great
- No, Thank you!
- Benches, wild life, open grass
- They should add a fishing area
- No.
- No.
- none.
- no
- Nothing else.
- No
- I would like the town to repair the dam.
- I do not, but I would like to see a better area for a park and more open land without trees.

Non-Natick Residents:

- Safe passage and convenient launch for canoes and kayaks is important. Landscape with native plants and some interpretive material on the benefit of native plants to the environment would be great.
- I'd remove the spillway, even if it's possible to shore up the dam without removing the trees from Grove Park.
- You seem to want to urbanize this area, it is small and if you were truly interested in climate and environmental protection (which to me includes wildlife and rare and native and threatened plant species, you wouldn't want to pave, add structures and draw more people to this area. It it lovely just the way it is . No one should be considering removing the dam, if it is unsafe, stop studying the safety of it and rebuild it. It should be quite easy to reengineer on the computer and hire a construction company that could handle that task.

Some things don't have to be the Hatch shell or have people everywhere. Let the south Natick dam and its park continue to be the beautiful, natural habitat and quiet gem it is right now. Let people alone to discover it themselves. Stop destroying the beauty of Natick.

- Repair the dam and make it a place that the community can come together and enjoy. I grew up coming to these falls. It would be a shame to destroy the dam and cause damage to wildlife and water levels in the river. Please be smart and make it a place for all to enjoy.
- Plan for viewing a herring run after Watertown Dam is upgraded or removed. It is awesome and attracts a lot of visitors along rivers open to the sea.
- Restore the dam and keep it beautiful 🥰
- The dam is a treasured resource. It completes the historical village
- The beauty of the spillway and the two parks resonate with me as I remember fishing and kayaking here in the 1970's.
- The Falls in South Natick has been a landmark for generations.
- Natick is a world class place in the world. The first bible was printed in Natick by a Protestant minister who learned the language of the indigenous Indians and printed the Bible particularly for the indigenous people. In today's world, this is an important reminder that perhaps we are missing some of the most important lessons of all.
- I much look forward to seeing and experiencing an invigorated version of the South Natick falls! I think the dynamics of the existing dam and falling water are a huge part of what has always made this place special. This is perhaps somewhat based in nostalgia but it also feels simply true. I'm also legitimately concerned about the various environmental impacts of completely removing this now very established dam at this particular point in time. I understand the findings of the silt sampling, and the ecological incentive regarding certain species of fish, but there seems to be some hubris informing a potential underestimation of overall ecological impact. By increasing communication of wildlife between the two sides of the dam, we're reestablishing access for native flora and fauna, but simultaneously expanding the access of invasives, known and unknown, in both directions of the river. Ecology is complex. If removing the dam is a serious consideration, I'd love to see more comprehensive, specific place-based assessment of how this will likely impact wildlife both upstream and downstream, from waterfowl to algae. Altering this rather large ecological system doesn't seem like something to be done without such an assessment. I understand that such a truly comprehensive assessment is a significant undertaking but I worry about making a change like this without more information. Regardless, it seems that the safest choice with the least potential for unforeseen ecological consequences would be to repair the dam. It so happens that I believe this will also yield the most appreciable outcome for all of us who live in Natick or come back periodically as I do to enjoy this special place. Thanks for listening!
- Please don't commercialize the area. Also, please remember the Indian sacred ground.
- I think they should rebuild the dam. It has been a great area to Natick for a long time. When I think of Natick, I think of the Charles River dam. It would be unfortunate for future generations to miss its beauty

- Try to keep the original and repair what is needed
- The dam and spillway should be repaired and upgraded, not destroyed.
- I grew up in South Natick a mile from the damn and I think that the spillway is iconic to the town. I think without it we would lose a sense of cultural identity that comes with living in south natick. Whenever I bring someone back to my parents house they always comment how scenic the waterfall is driving across the bridge. So many of my memories in south natick focus around that waterfall spillway and the thought of it going away really saddens me. I hope the town keeps it, creates a wonderful open grassy park, and maintains the river as it is so that one day I can take my children their the same way mine took me as a kid.
- If there is serious consideration to removing the dam and letting the river flow, I hope there is TOTAL assurance that downstream lands will not flood, especially given the high likelihood that climate change brings dramatic swings in precipitation.
- It's my hope that even if the spillway is removed, somehow, someway the area can be made so beautiful that people will be as drawn to it in the future as they are now.
- This is Natick's little Niagara with a beautiful lake-like impoundment behind it; a tranquil and beautiful spot. Turning into one more stretch of muddy riverbank amounts to a desecration. Fix it and use it to promote the town as one that's willing to invest in its future by preserving such a unique beauty spot.
- I would like to see that the Dam has been removed.
- Important to allow fish to freely migrate, and shade trees for reducing water temps
- Repair dam, but provide better spillway for fish to get upriver
- I think it's time to move forward and not replace the dam, what would be wonderful if we have an appealing walkway over the dam to connect the two areas
- Hello, Please save this special spot in Natick. The South Natick Falls is the most beautiful attraction in this town, generations of NHS students have taken their prom photos here and weddings have also happened here. This is a hot spot in Natick and it would be a shame if it was destroyed. Not to mention the historical value. The South Natick Dam needs to be restored, not destroyed. This is a great opportunity to rebuild the parks on either side and make it even more beautiful.
- This area is critically important in giving people this oasis of reflective nature in a time of great mental stress, and at a time when people are embracing natural settings to improve their mantal well being. The presentation about the welfare of fish if the dam was eliminated was ludicrous in ignoring the needs of the many people who come there every day for their human welfare
- I support letting the river run again, enabling fish and people to navigate easily. It doesn't make sense to me that the town would have the continuing financial burden of maintaining the structure. In addition, it would be nice to keep the trees.
- Thanks for studying all of the options!
- More mostly natural spaces, or when not possible prioritize ecological landscaping favoring native plants
- The dam itself should remain with some semblance as in the past as far as present day feasibility allows following use and recreation studies.