

# Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



## Joint Boards and Committees Meeting February 13, 2007

### Introduction

On February 12 and 13, 2007, members of the five boards and committees that sponsor the *Natick 360* strategic planning process met jointly to consider strategic planning questions. The five boards and committee are: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, Planning Board and School Committee. Members were invited to attend either date; both meetings had the same agenda. All five boards and committees posted public notices for both meetings.

The participants reviewed the *Natick 360* consensus value and vision statements that they had earlier accepted unanimously. Key questions were, “What are the gaps between Natick today and the vision for Natick?” “What are the barriers to achieving the Natick vision statements?” “What are things that will help Natick achieve its vision statements?” Facilitators urged participants to keep their perspective broad, at “30,000 feet.”

In small groups, participants wrote their issues, gaps and barriers on sticky notes, which they read aloud and placed on a wall. Participants then rearranged the notes into clusters, and labeled each cluster. The issues are shown below, in their labeled clusters. The participants created a network of clusters with different mixes of issues; thus, several issues may be repeated as under several clusters.

The issues and clusters are presented below in random order; no prioritization is implied. Issues that appear in more than one cluster are repeated. Repetition does not imply priority; rather, it means that some issues may be looked at from several different perspectives.

Participants at the February 13 meeting included:

- Matt Gardner, Conservation Commission
- Kathy Rehl, Conservation Commission
- George Richards, Planning Board
- Rich Sydney, Finance Committee
- Bruce Wright, Finance Committee
- Rick Wynne, School Committee

## Issues, Gaps and Barriers

The issues, gaps and barriers that the participants identified at the February 12 joint meeting are shown below, as bulleted items. The clusters are shown in headings.

### Natick for families

- Insufficient affordable housing; housing prices are too high; land prices
- Housing is too expensive
- Enhance the effectiveness of delivery of instruction across a variety of learning styles, especially high schools
- Middle schools under-perform
- Grades 5 and 6 should be elementary school

### Economic health

- Insufficient affordable housing; housing prices are too high; land prices
- Housing is too expensive
- Businesses need to be more visible to residents

### Schools

- High school building
- Enhance the effectiveness of delivery of instruction across a variety of learning styles, especially high schools
- Middle schools under-perform
- Grades 5 and 6 should be elementary school

### Living/working in Natick

- Lack of mixed use development downtown
- Downtown parking
- No parking
- Insufficient affordable housing; housing prices are too high; land prices
- Housing is too expensive
- Businesses need to be more visible to residents

### Civic education, knowledge and participation

- Groups with different specific agendas
- Lack of understanding in how Town government works
- Involvement in government: Town Meeting, committees & boards; attendance at public meetings
- Apathy toward participation in local government
- Revenue does not keep up with expenses of needs and wants
- Affordable housing law 40B adversely affects town density and costs without Town input
- Enhance the effectiveness of delivery of instruction across a variety of learning styles, especially high schools
- Middle schools under-perform
- Grades 5 and 6 should be elementary school

## **Public/private partnerships**

- Revenue does not keep up with expenses of needs and wants
- Businesses need to be more visible to residents

## **Affordable housing**

- Revenue does not keep up with expenses of needs and wants
- Affordable housing law 40B adversely affects town density and costs without Town input
- Insufficient affordable housing; housing prices are too high; land prices
- Housing is too expensive

## **Vibrant downtown**

- Lack of mixed use development downtown
- Downtown parking
- No parking
- Insufficient affordable housing; housing prices are too high; land prices
- Housing is too expensive

## **Capital requirements, allocation & prioritization**

- Lack of mixed use development downtown
- Downtown parking
- No parking
- Senior/community/youth center
- High school building

## **Parking**

- Downtown parking
- No parking
- Limited parking near trails and Town forest; signage & maintenance communicating availability

## **Infrastructure**

- Downtown parking
- No parking
- Senior/community/youth center
- High school building
- Limited parking near trails and Town forest; signage & maintenance communicating availability
- No good north-south road corridors to handle through traffic
- Natick public transportation infrastructure is lacking (old train station, minimal public bus) – regional?
- Public transportation does not go east and west

## **Public transportation**

- No good north-south road corridors to handle through traffic
- Natick public transportation infrastructure is lacking (old train station, minimal public bus) – regional?
- Public transportation does not go east and west

## Process Check

Participants provided feedback on the meeting, including things they liked about the meeting (plusses), and things they would change for future meetings (deltas):

<b>Things Participants Liked (Plusses)</b>	<b>Things Participants Would Change (Deltas)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fun</li><li>● Silent exercise</li><li>● Foster cooperation</li><li>● Foster critical thinking</li><li>● Groupings exercise showed connectedness</li><li>● Liked colored markers</li><li>● Not boxed in</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● More time for the top 10 list; rushed</li><li>● More time for individual consideration</li><li>● More colors for markers</li><li>● Grids for groups?</li></ul>