

Natick 360 SPOC

Public Website Review

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Bill and Andrés met to review the Natick 360 website (www.natick360.com or www.natick360.org). Below is a summary of observations and suggestions.

Public Website Requirements

Primary Objective: Public site for historical archive and easy navigation

Primary Users: Natick residents who are interested in learning about the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Planning Process used to develop the Plan

Secondary Objectives: Teaching tool for interested parties within or outside of Natick that may want to learn how to implement a similar process

Additional Users: General public, town officials, etc. interested in strategic planning processes for communities

Life Expectancy: Minimum of five years, until next strategic planning process

URL: Within or linked to Natick Town website (www.natickma.gov)

Hosted by: TBD

Ongoing Maintenance: Town of Natick Information Services?

Public Website Structure

- **Consensus:** Strategic Plan has to be prominent, up front and center in main page (home) and contents have to be easily accessible with a single click. The plan could theoretically *be* the content of the home page, with embedded links and a navigational pane (to be determined, based in part on the design standards to which the page must conform).
- **Consensus:** The organizational structure is largely dictated by the structure of the existing documents. We are not suggesting re-writing or re-structuring any documents; we are suggesting “relating” some documents to one another, via hyperlinks and navigational paths.
- **Consensus:** While browsing the Strategic Plan online, users need to be able to easily access the input to the Strategic Plan. E.g. we could provide hyperlinks to the key inputs:
 - *Our Community Yesterday and Today*, the report of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on Natick characteristics;
 - *Natick Value and Vision Statements*, developed as part of the Phase 2 workshops;
 - *The results of the Strategic Choices workshops* held June 8-10;
 - *The results of the scientific random sample survey of Natick residents*, conducted in July and early August by independent contractor ETC Institute of Olathe, Kansas; and,
 - *The priorities and suggested action items of the individual sponsoring boards and committees.*

- **For Group Discussion:** Navigational paths. We discussed several ways that users may wish to browse the content, which led to several possible paths (or “styles”) of browsing the content:
 - By Phases: I, II, III, IV [*Rough draft available*]
 - By Time: Calendar dates
 - By Major Public Event: Workshops, Survey, etc.
 - By Phases and/or Time and/or Major Public Event (i.e., “all of the above”).

Since the links between documents will not change, the only real variable here is the “starting point(s)” for each of those possible navigation paths, potentially with a separate “home” page for each path. Therefore, we’re assuming the “all of the above” navigation option, since it provides maximum readability/usability without making assumptions about the entry-point to the user experience.

We are not suggesting links from all documents to all other documents that they reference. At least for the initial implementation, all cross-document links will begin in the strategic plan (or in other, clearly-defined locations that must be identified and documented.) Navigation paths may be limited or augmented by technical considerations and resource constraints. It would be nice, for example, if a reference from document A to table B in document C was actually implemented with a hyperlink to that specific location... however, this may fall victim to the law of diminishing returns. SPOC can have a general discussion but expectation is that actual layout will need to wait until engaging with web designer. At this time, piloting of alternatives may be an option for further evaluation.

Public Website Content

- A first pass review of the key contents for the website was performed. Please refer to: [Natick 360 -Website -111907.xls](#). Documents include:
 - Formal Reports – Strategic Plan, Surveys, Workshops, etc.
 - Notes / Session Outputs – Boards, Key Informants, Public, etc.
 - Presentations – MPAC, Keynote Speakers, etc.
 - Contributors & Sponsors
 - Links – Media, FAQs, Misc.
- An in-depth review of all documents, including those on the Blackerby Associates web site, will be required to formally identify all documents that will be included in the final website. Decisions required will be:
 - Document Inclusion / Exclusion
 - Linkages into navigational paths.

Public Website Development

- Who will be the web designer? E.g. Thread Media, Virtual Town Hall, etc.?
- How will the process of developing the website be managed? I.e. interaction with web designer?
- Is there a budget available for this purpose?

Public Website Technical Issues

- Documents: PDFs or HTMLs?
 - E.g. We envision having hyperlinks within the Strategic Plan to easily access the inputs referenced above in Website Structure (one-click)
 - Do we want to assume the documents are being browsed interactively online, or simply downloaded and printed? Interactive online use would help address the concern of “making sense of this material two years from now,” particularly for someone who was not part of this process.
- Google-ability / Search: Can we avoid a dedicated search function?
 - Natick Town Website has a Google Search Box
 - Some search capability is required; if the pages are all indexed by search engines, we can potentially leave the search functionality to those sites.
- Linkage to Town Website: Does it need to conform to color scheme / structure or a simple linkage is sufficient?
 - Please note we could not find a link to the current website in Town’s Website

All documents should be modified to conform to the following standards:

1. Date-of-release (of the document) appears on each page of each document (e.g. in the footer)
2. The title page of each document should incorporate its date-of-release, the date of the event (if the document is related to a specific event/activity), and the project Phasing designation.
3. All document files should be named with a reference to the approximate date/time when they were produced (e.g. Workshop3_Jun2007.pdf).

Related Questions / Comments

- **Blackerby Associates Website:** <http://www.blackerbyassoc.com/Natick/#Management>
 - A lot of material is included here, included SPOC Meeting Minutes, Workshop Feedback Reports, Vignettes, Budget / Working Notes, etc.
 - How will this be archived? Does it need to be cleaned up? Who will do this (i.e. Blackerby?)

- **Fountain Hills Strategic Plan:** Visited Website:
<http://www.fh.az.gov/strategicplan/>
 - Fountain Hills established a Strategic Advisory Commission (SPAC), whose mission is to guide the plan and engage the public in dialogue about the Plan's implementation.
 - What is the Plan for Natick 360? How will Implementation be tracked? Is there a need for a continuance of the SPOC or some altered committee? Or does this responsibility lie entirely with Town Meeting, Boards & Committees?
- **Wrap-Up Activities:**
 - **Marketing / Advertising:** When Public Website is launched
 - Advertise to Community and Sponsors
 - Also, would it make sense to send a thank you note to all Sponsors along with a linkage to the website to show the result of the process (a copy of the Strategic Plan Executive Summary could also be included)