

Focus Areas for Brainstorming  
Business Forum April 13, 2007

1. How can we begin to build a real partnership between town government and services and the business community (this may include the Town Ambassador idea; improved communication, formal committees, etc.)
  1. Create a position of a Town Concierge for the business community (“go to” person for any and all questions and concerns of business (help navigate town systems and procedures; direct to appropriate resources; develop joint programs/initiatives with schools, seniors, etc.)
  2. Maintain the single tax rate in Town, but reach out to business community to help educate the broader community of the positive implications of single tax rate (this was perceived as a major strength of Natick and a motivator to locate businesses here.)
  
2. In what ways can the business community and the Town of Natick work together to address the traffic and parking issues facing Natick and the surrounding area?
  1. Build a foot bridge across Route 9 (Sherwood Plaza to Mall area).
  2. Consider adding a train stop just east or west of downtown to relieve congestion (down South Ave. or closer to the Clix building on Cochituate Ave).
  3. Convert the Clix building to a parking garage.
  4. Create a shuttle bus service to reach satellite parking in Sherborn, Wayland, and other parts of Natick.
  5. Build a parking garage at the West Natick train station.
  6. Encourage participation of business community to join the town to bring specific pressure to State government to improve traffic and public transportation (joint letters and requests; attend meetings as partners; organize businesses to contact and communicate with state bodies): Business Municipal Consortium with formal agenda and objectives (across towns and regional businesses).

7. Encourage and invite business community to embrace and support any regional public transportation efforts.
  8. Town needs to better coordinate road work whenever possible to keep at least one major route open when other projects are underway.
  9. Reach out to businesses to support Rail Trail efforts, pointing out the benefits of reduced congestion, access between downtown and Route 9. Formalize Trail System so they are not lost to future development.
3. In what ways can the business community and the Town of Natick work together to increase citizen involvement in the town and region? (e.g., voting, volunteerism, communication, education)
1. Formalize what the Town wants related to citizen involvement and communicate it to the business community. Provide concrete objectives and suggested activities that businesses can do to help.
  2. Re-establish the School—Business liaison position.
  3. This is an area where the Town Business “Concierge” position could play an important role.
4. In what ways can the business community and the Town of Natick work together to help the town manage growth going forward? (e.g., formal collaboration between developers and town officials; permitting and zoning procedures, etc.)
1. Formal, periodic meetings among business community members, the community development director, and town board representation (Selectmen, Planning, etc.).
  2. Review zoning regulations; study other towns’ experience/solutions with zoning issues (Concord and Wellesley) to learn from their experience to keep small businesses in their downtowns as well as encouraging new businesses.
  3. Continue to explore specified development districts to obtain the mix and scale of development desired for the town.

5. In what ways can the business community and the Town of Natick work together to recruit more employers to the town and region?
  1. Develop impactful marketing materials to specifically address the strengths and values of moving to Natick (look at Natick Center Associates materials as starting point). Funded by business community and/or town.
  2. All suggestions related to business-town partnership, parking/traffic will help encourage employers to locate here.
  
6. In what ways can the business community and the Town of Natick work together to provide a high quality education to our children and the community as a whole?
  1. Explore the possibility of bringing a satellite campus to Natick (the National Guard property?): UMass, private institutions (e.g., University of Phoenix, Western New England College)
  2. Develop an “Adopt a Classroom” and/or “Adopt a School” program, laying out desired business commitment (time, money).
  3. Create a mechanism for the business community to provide advice and perspective on practical curriculum.
  4. This is an area where the Town Business “Concierge” position could play a role.