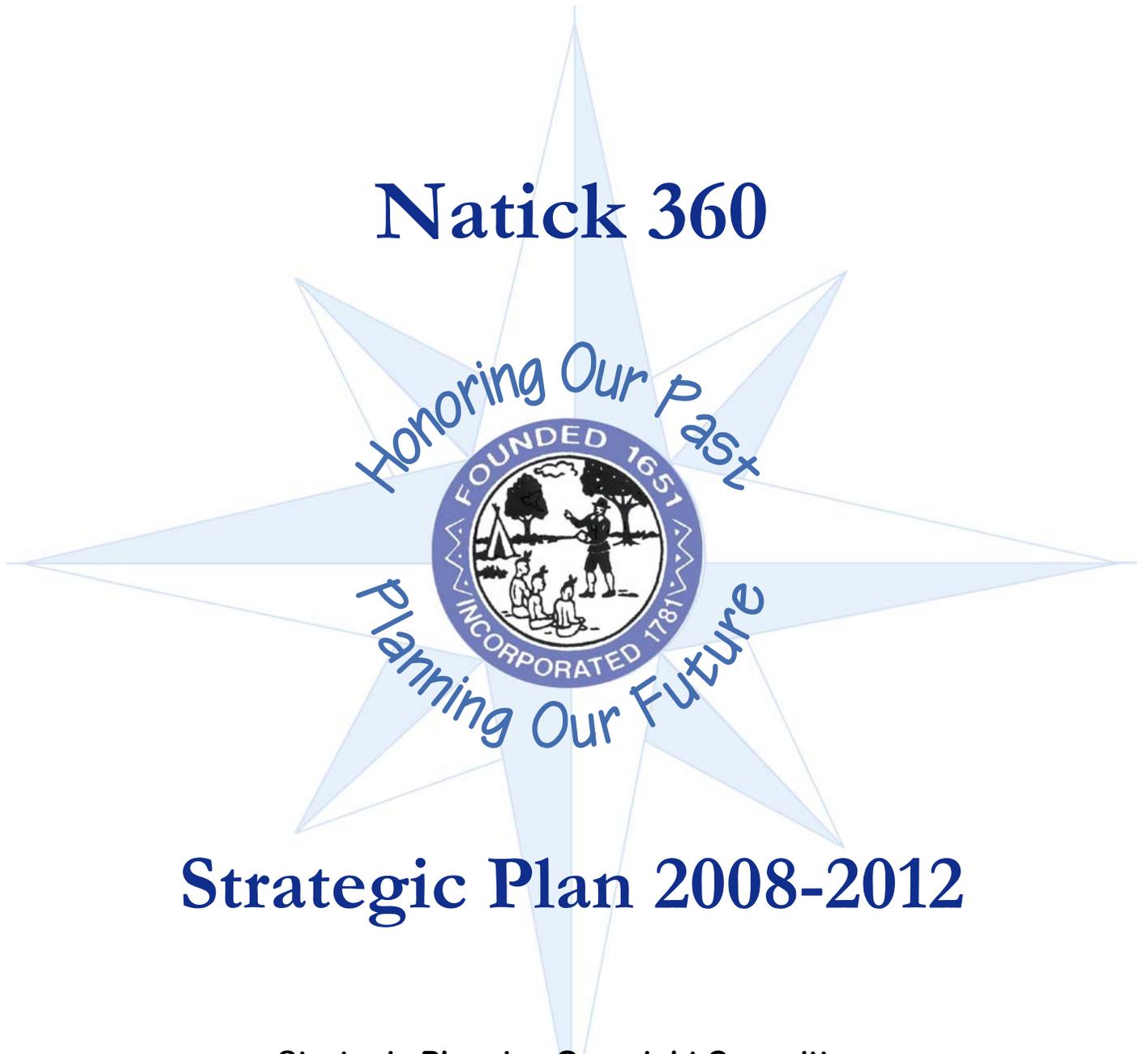


Natick 360



Strategic Plan 2008-2012

Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

Final Ver. 1.2, March 31, 2008

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



**Town of Natick Strategic Plan
 2008-2012**

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Overview	1
Natick Value and Vision Statements.....	2
Strategic Goals.....	3
Action Items	4
Goal: Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community.....	4
Board of Selectmen	4
Conservation Commission	4
Finance Committee	4
Planning Board.....	5
School Committee	5
Goal: Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees.....	6
Board of Selectmen	6
Conservation Commission	6
Finance Committee	6
Planning Board.....	6
School Committee	7
Goal: Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change.....	8
Board of Selectmen	8
Conservation Commission	8
Finance Committee	8
Planning Board.....	8
School Committee	8
Goal: Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.	9
Board of Selectmen	9
Conservation Commission	9
Finance Committee	9
Planning Board.....	9
School Committee	9

Goal: Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability.10

- Board of Selectmen10
- Conservation Commission10
- Finance Committee10
- Planning Board.....10
- School Committee10

Goal: Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects.12

- Board of Selectmen12
- Conservation Commission12
- Finance Committee12
- Planning Board.....12
- School Committee12

Goal: Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements.....13

- Board of Selectmen13
- Conservation Commission13
- Finance Committee13
- Planning Board.....13
- School Committee13

Goal: Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town.....14

- Board of Selectmen14
- Conservation Commission14
- Finance Committee14
- Planning Board.....14
- School Committee14

Goal: Encourage Natick’s transition to an environmentally sustainable community.15

- Board of Selectmen15
- Conservation Commission15
- Finance Committee15
- Planning Board.....15
- School Committee15

Goal: Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs.....16

- Board of Selectmen16
- Conservation Commission16
- Finance Committee16
- Planning Board.....16
- School Committee16

Goal: Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center.17

- Board of Selectmen17
- Conservation Commission17
- Finance Committee17
- Planning Board.....17
- School Committee17

Goal: Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents.18

- Board of Selectmen18
- Conservation Commission18
- Finance Committee18
- Planning Board.....18
- School Committee18

Conclusion19

Acknowledgements.....20

- Private Sector Financial Sponsors.....20
- Volunteers20
- Strategic Planning Process Participants.....20
- Special Thanks21
- Strategic Planning Oversight Committee.....22
- Consulting Partners.....23
 - Metropolitan Area Planning Council23
 - Blackerby Associates, Inc.23
 - ETC Institute.....23

Appendices.....24

- Appendix A. Board of Selectmen Action Plan.....25
- Appendix B. Conservation Commission Action Plan.....29
- Appendix C. Finance Committee Action Plan.....31
- Appendix D. Planning Board Action Plan.....35
- Appendix E. School Committee Action Plan.....38
- Appendix F. Town Meeting Article 15, May 2, 200643

Natick 360

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Town of Natick Strategic Plan 2008-2012

Overview

Natick 360 is the Town of Natick's strategic planning process. It is sponsored by five of the Town's boards and committees: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, Planning Board and School Committee. *Natick 360* was authorized by Town Meeting in spring 2006. Each of the sponsoring boards and committees designated a representative to the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC), which then selected four additional members at large, to oversee the strategic planning process through four phases:

- *Phase 1. Our Community Yesterday and Today:* The Metropolitan Area Planning Council researched and published a study of Natick, its history, its characteristics, strategic advantages and disadvantages, and resources.
- *Phase 2. Our Shared Values and Vision:* Based on a summary of citizen input at the October 2006 "Vision for the Future" meeting of Natick residents, the five sponsoring boards and committees developed and adopted a set of values that are widely shared throughout the community, and statements describing a shared vision of the Town's aspirations.
- *Phase 3. Our Strategic Options:* In a series of joint meetings among members of the five sponsoring boards and committees; a gathering of members of the public; a meeting of "key informants," who are leaders in government, not-for-profit and business sectors throughout the region, potential solutions to key issues facing the Town were identified. The Town staff helped identify cost categories for these strategic options.
- *Phase 4. Our Strategic Choices:* In the June 2007 "Strategic Choice" meeting, citizens narrowed and prioritized the list of options. A scientific random sample survey solicited residents' opinions. The sponsoring boards and committees narrowed the list further, added their own input, and developed 12 goal statements focusing on the results they want the Town to achieve. Each board and committee then identified actions it could take that would advance the 12 goals.

Strategic planning consultants Blackerby Associates of Phoenix managed the project and provided independent facilitators for the meetings, under the SPOC's oversight.

The five sponsoring boards and committees considered five primary sources in developing the strategic goals for 2008-2012:

- *Our Community Yesterday and Today*, the report of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on Natick characteristics;
- *Natick Value and Vision Statements*, developed through the "Vision for the Future" meetings October 27-29, 2006, and workshops for members of the sponsoring boards and committees;
- *The results of the "Strategic Choices" workshops* held June 8-10, 2007, and facilitated meetings of the sponsoring boards and committees;
- *The results of the scientific random sample survey of Natick residents*, conducted in July and early August 2007 by independent survey firm ETC Institute of Olathe, Kansas; and,
- The priorities and suggested action items of the individual sponsoring boards and committees.

Natick Value and Vision Statements

During the October 27-29, 2006, “Vision for the Future” weekend, residents gave facilitators input about the values they share, and their vision of Natick’s future. In a series of facilitated joint meetings, members of the five sponsoring boards and committees refined this data, and developed it into the following series of value statements and vision statements.

As citizens of Natick, we value:

- Natick’s “small-town” sense as a safe, interconnected community fed by its heritage, pride and spirit of volunteerism, and by its diversity, derived from its tradition of affordability and welcoming nature;
- Natick’s stewardship of its diverse open spaces, and natural resources;
- A high-value education for students at all levels and abilities, and continuing educational opportunities for all Natick citizens;
- A variety of businesses that create a wide range of jobs and provide support to the community in many ways;
- Natick Center, a vibrant focal point of our community;
- Natick’s abundance of cultural, recreational and educational facilities, wide array of municipal services, and proximity to major transit and transportation resources that contribute to our high quality of life.

As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which:

- Natick is a healthy community of diverse and interconnected citizens, businesses, organizations and neighborhoods, where citizens of all ages, backgrounds and income levels can live, work and thrive;
- Natick’s natural resources are preserved and accessible to the community;
- Natick Center is the vibrant core of the community, a unique and accessible destination for commerce, community and culture, day and night;
- Natick’s public schools and programs are recognized as among the best;
- Natick’s self-government, supported by informed and engaged citizens, is fiscally sound, delivers services efficiently and communicates effectively with the public;
- Natick’s public infrastructure and buildings fulfill their function efficiently and effectively to the satisfaction of the community, and are maintained in good working order;
- Natick is a desirable and accessible destination that marshals local and regional partners and resources to solve problems and enhance the quality of life for all its citizens.

Strategic Goals

Based on the input from residents in the June 2007 “Strategic Choices” meetings, as well as their own knowledge and experience, the sponsoring boards and committees developed the following twelve goals for the years 2008-2012 (in random order):

- Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community.
- Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees.
- Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change.
- Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.
- Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability.
- Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects.
- Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements.
- Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town.
- Encourage Natick’s transition to an environmentally sustainable community.
- Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs.
- Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center.
- Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents.

Action Items

After arriving at the list of strategic goals, each of the five sponsoring boards and committees developed a list of specific action items it will pursue to advance the strategic goals:

Goal: Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community.

Board of Selectmen

- Review, ratify and implement Financial Management Principles.
- Investigate and implement operational efficiencies and cost controls.
- Advocate for increased and sustainable state aid.
- Investigate and advocate for sources of revenue other than property taxes.
- Refine and monitor the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Identify future liabilities that will affect our operating budget.
- Regularly evaluate the level of local government services that Natick taxpayers will support.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

Short term

- Review what is put forth to optimize and enhance revenue sources; ensure that appropriate revenue sources and projected expenses have been considered; administration/proponent decisions are based on sound financial principles; critically review all revenues and requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Review what is put forth to manage expenses; appropriate revenue sources and projected expenses have been considered; administration/proponent decisions are based on sound financial principles.
- Review what is put forth to where possible, improve operational efficiency; ensure that operation efficiencies have been maximized.

Long term

- Review what is put forth to encourage well-planned economic development.
- Review what is put forth to show all revenues and expenditures, including grants and non-appropriated revenues as long as the town makes clear these are off budget and not impacting the taxpayer yet enhancing services.

Timeframe not identified

- Incorporate three-year revenue and expense forecasts into the annual budget.
- Collaborate with administration to allocate all unallocated departmental expenses (i.e., benefits, insurance, retirement contributions, energy, etc.) in order to get a true understanding of the town's costs on a department and/or program level.
- Encourage the administration to provide complete and accurate information in a timely manner to allow Finance Committee members adequate time for review.
- Facilitate effective communication between town entities and residents through the timely posting of Finance Committee materials and information on website and at the Morse Institute Library and Bacon Library.

Planning Board

- Plan for expanded economic development downtown and in commercial and industrial districts.

School Committee

- Natick Public Schools, in its annual budget review, will continue to evaluate the operational efficiency of the services required and desired by the community, and continue to place the needs of the students first.
- Continue to optimize and enhance revenue sources.
- Where possible, improve operational efficiency.
- Continue to incorporate three-year revenue and expense forecasts into the annual budget
- Link changes in the budget to changes in outcome-based performance measures, where appropriate.
- Review all Town services for potential costs and benefits of outsourcing or privatization.
- Continue to request the State Government allocate more funds for aid to education.

Goal: Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees.

Board of Selectmen

- Ensure that the Town communicates with the public through newsletters, web, email, TV, press or other means.
- Provide town volunteers and employees with accurate information about Open Meeting, Public Records and Ethics regulations.
- Communicate about opportunities to serve in Town Government.
- Continue to enhance accessibility of local officials.
- Continue to promote voter participation in local elections.

Conservation Commission

Short term

- Publish a brochure that describes the role of the Conservation Commission, the laws relevant to Natick Citizens, and ways to protect Natick's natural resources.

Medium term

- Publish 2 times per year a newsletter to the community that discusses ongoing issues of importance to the community.

Long term

- Make better use of cable TV and press releases to inform the public of Conservation Commission activities and issues.

Finance Committee

Short term

- Maintain and develop effective communication channels between the Town and its Citizens (the Finance Committee could have a letter on the town website on our role and how we follow the charter and bylaws for our practices).
- Encourage broad public participation in civic affairs (by providing public information on television if we have an opening in the committee and how to apply).

Timeframe not identified

- Improve communication and cooperation among Town departments, boards and committees
- Publish and distribute a simplified budget report, providing residents with clear and readable information about: the relationships between services and taxes; how revenues are spent; limits on discretionary spending; cost of public services and capital outlays; state aid; impact mitigation funds; revenue alternatives; changes in revenues and expenses over time.
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Planning Board

- Televisе all meetings on Pegasus.
- More joint meetings with Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission and Design Review Board.
- Have minutes approved regularly and posted on-line upon approval.

School Committee

- Under the leadership of our new Superintendent of Schools, the School Committee will evaluate new approaches when appropriate to improve public awareness of the Natick Public Schools. This includes promoting awareness of school activities, student achievement, district initiatives, and budgetary matters. There will be a continuous focus on this objective in each year and with each school-based initiative.
- Maintain and develop effective communication channels between the Town and its Citizens.
- Improve communication and cooperation among Town departments, boards and committees.
- Involve the community in the schools' successes.
- Define, identify and periodically provide updates to the community about school performance and school assets; for example: establish and distribute to parents and the community the district-wide plan for integrating curriculum, assessment and professional development; refine and publish elementary and middle school curriculum maps that delineate skills taught in every subject area during the school year.
- Expand communications between the schools and broader Natick community, through newsletters, email, website, cable access TV and other media, to celebrate school accomplishments, demonstrate the value of schools to Natick, identify ways residents can contribute to schools' success, and increase community participation in school activities.
- Increase use of Natick Town TV (Pegasus), including interviews, discussions of local issues, and educational programs about how Town government works.
- Encourage residents and members of the business community to participate in Town boards, committees and projects.
- Improve board and committee practices, such as: improving communications; scheduling regular cross-board and committee meetings; adopting ways for residents to participate electronically; supporting changes in open meeting law to accommodate on-line participation.
- Publish and distribute a simplified budget report, providing residents with clear and readable information about: the relationships between services and taxes; how revenues are spent; limits on discretionary spending; cost of public services and capital outlays; state aid; impact mitigation funds; revenue alternatives; changes in revenues and expenses over time.

Goal: Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change.**Board of Selectmen**

- Evaluate the current public safety staffing and costs and recommend modifications as appropriate.
- Continue to promote training and leadership development within public safety departments.
- Ensure that development mitigation addresses public safety needs.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative service delivery models.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee**Short term**

- Evaluate the studies requested by other bodies regarding ongoing needs of relevant departments such as Police, Fire, Emergency Medical, Board of Health, Inspection Services, etc.

Timeframe not identified

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Participate in building studies.

Planning Board

- Ensure public safety is adequately addressed in all developments.
- Explore regional solutions.

School Committee

- The School Committee will continue to ensure that the Superintendent of Schools and administration, in collaboration when appropriate with Natick's public safety departments, optimize school security, safety, and evacuation plans.
- Evaluate the ongoing needs of relevant departments such as Police, Fire, Emergency Medical, Board of Health, Inspection Services, etc.

Goal: Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.

Board of Selectmen

- Ensure that the Community Development Department has adequate resources needed to achieve beneficial development.
- Promote the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- Implement the Housing Plan to maximize residential housing options for the entire community.
- Investigate and promote zoning changes to maintain and encourage housing diversity and affordability.
- Coordinate housing development with transportation improvements.

Conservation Commission

Long term

- The Conservation Commission will work with the Town DPW to identify areas where septic/cess pool systems are leaking, and where targeted investment in sewer connections would have a beneficial impact on natural resources.

Finance Committee

Short term

- Evaluate these plans per charter as they become a warrant article.

Timeframe not identified

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in community/senior center construction project, as appropriate.

Planning Board

- Encourage development in Natick Center.
- Increase capacity and resources as follows:
 - Adequately staff the Community Development department.
- Work more closely with private sector (public/private partnership).
- Review Floor Area Ratio (density) By-Law to assess affect on future development.
- Increase Affordable Housing Stock to address Chapter 40B.
- Utilize Affordable Housing Trust.
- Consider inclusionary zoning by-law.
- Implement and maintain housing plan.

School Committee

- The School Committee will continue to ensure that the Superintendent of Schools evaluates and projects student enrollment as compared to school capacity. This evaluation will continue to incorporate consideration of expected population growth and change in connection with new housing developments, and will be conducted, when appropriate, in collaboration with the Director of Community Development. Results will continue to be discussed at least annually in public meetings.

Goal: Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability.

Board of Selectmen

- Maintain regular communication and coordination between the Selectmen and the School Committee.
- Advocate for fair and sustainable levels of state funding to support Natick's Public Schools.
- Pursue state and local support for a replacement or renovation of Natick High School.
- Ensure that school infrastructure and building projects are incorporated into the Town's capital plan.
- Pursue partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to promote educational opportunities and alternative revenue.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

- Work with School Administration to improve and enhance the presentation of budget information to the public.
- Work with School Administration to identify and include all revenues sources and expenditures in the budget presentation.
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in high school construction/renovation project(s), as appropriate.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Participate in building studies.

Planning Board

No action items.

School Committee

- The School Committee will continue to evaluate and support optimization of the services currently rendered to and needed by students, both mandated and non-mandated. We will evaluate and, when appropriate, support the implementation of new initiatives and approaches for improving educational quality, opportunities, and outcomes that may be proposed by the new incoming Superintendent of Schools.
- Ensure that Natick education programs are among the best.
- Ensure that Natick schools infrastructure is among the best.
- Ensure that Natick education programs and facilities are integrated into the community
- Build a new replacement Natick High School.
- Upgrade infrastructure of all Natick schools to meet educational goals.
- Given current student population, reduce student/teacher ratio where beneficial within constraints of current facilities by adding support staff and/or teacher assistants.
- Given current student population, reduce student/teacher ratio where beneficial by adding teachers and classrooms as necessary.

School Committee (Continued)

- Attract and retain qualified teachers and administrators by offering salaries, benefits, and ongoing professional development at levels competitive with surrounding communities.
- Re-engineer core subject areas where necessary to ensure they are taught in a rigorous, challenging way. Costs might include new textbooks, additional staffing, curriculum, or professional development.
- Expand curriculum offerings. For example, offer foreign language in elementary school, offer more languages in middle schools and high school; add orchestra, music theory, engineering, additional business courses, etc.
- Improve educational outcomes by offering supplemental e-learning opportunities, including in professional development.
- Explore ways in which local and regional institutions, businesses and community members can mentor, tutor, conduct seminars or provide other expanded or enhanced educational services or offerings.
- Hire a grants coordinator to maximize outside funding sought by Natick Public Schools.

Goal: Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects.**Board of Selectmen**

- Refine and monitor the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Develop and communicate to the community plans for major initiatives, including project descriptions, timetables, funding options and the decision process for projects such as: the High School, Senior Center, West Natick Fire Station, Rail Trail, school expansion/renovation projects, public works infrastructure and transportation projects.
- Obtain appropriate mitigation funding from future development.
- Work with the legislative delegation and state/federal agencies to obtain funding for all eligible projects.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

- Review the five-year capital plan and Town-wide priorities.
- Participate in improving the capital planning and budgeting process.
- Review the Town's capital budget.
- Work with Town and School Administration to clarify the presentation of the Capital Plan
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in extraordinary capital project(s), as appropriate.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Participate in building studies.

Planning Board

- More Planning Board involvement with new senior/community center.
- More Planning Board involvement with downtown parking garage(s).
- Encourage more Planning Board involvement in reviewing site plans for all major Town capital projects (specifically including the proposed new High School and Senior/Community Center) to ensure adequate parking, landscaping, traffic flows, visual impacts, etc.

School Committee

- The School Committee and Superintendent of Schools will continue, as appropriate, to collaborate and communicate with applicable town boards and the Town Administrator regarding the Natick Public Schools' three-year capital project plan and any known capital risks so that the town can appropriately plan for managing extraordinary capital projects/requirements.
- Build a new replacement Natick High School.
- Upgrade infrastructure of all Natick schools to meet educational goals.
- Build a new high school appropriate for modern curriculum and technology.
- Build a new high school appropriate for modern curriculum and technology, using green building design and materials.
- Build a new high school appropriate for modern curriculum and technology, using green building design and materials, and including facilities appropriate for dual-use by students and town residents.
- Improve the capital planning and budgeting process.
- Update the Town's capital budget.

Goal: Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements.

Board of Selectmen

- Ensure that the Capital Improvement Plan properly addresses the need to maintain the Town's infrastructure.
- Advocate for increased state and federal funding for roadway repair.
- Maintain the Town's infrastructure for long-term benefit.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

- Review the five-year capital plan and Town-wide priorities.
- Participate in improving the capital planning and budgeting process.
- Review the Town's capital budget.
- Work with Town and School Administration to clarify the presentation of the Capital Plan.
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in extraordinary capital project(s), as appropriate.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.

Planning Board

- Optimize Use and Efficiencies of Town Buildings.
- Promote existing and new buildings to be more multi-use.

School Committee

- The School Committee will ensure that the school department continues to maintain (on a rolling basis) and evaluate its three-year capital plan. The Committee will continue to review the capital plan annually as of part of the overall budget strategy review. The finalized plan will be distributed to all other applicable boards and the Town Administrator or designee.
- Evaluate the Town's needs for maintenance and improvement of public facilities and infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, water and sewer, buildings, and schools, etc.
- Establish and keep to a regular capital investment schedule to keep the building in good condition and able to provide an appropriate learning environment. Over the next five years improvements may be needed at Kennedy Middle School, Memorial School, and Johnson School.
- Update the five-year capital plan and Town-wide priorities.

Goal: Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town.**Board of Selectmen**

- Maximize use of the Regional Transit Authority to fund public transportation within and beyond Natick.
- Ensure that the RIDE service is adequately funded; advocate for full accessibility of the Natick Center T station and mobility for all members of the community, including Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) compliance for all town transportation systems and infrastructure.
- Promote alternatives to private car transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle and mass transportation.
- Ensure that Natick's major transportation initiatives are represented in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process, including Route 27, and the intersections of Routes 9/27 and Route 9/Oak.
- Participate in regional solutions to regional transportation problems.
- Leverage development for roadway improvement projects.
- Encourage expansion and reliability of MBTA service.
- Obtain appropriate development mitigation for roadway improvement projects.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Planning Board

- Improve the efficiency of roadways:
 - Adequately address transportation options in all developments.
 - Continue to work proactively with State on intersections at Routes 9/27 and Route 9/Oak.
 - Continue to work on regional solutions.

School Committee

- In part to minimize the traffic impact of Natick's 4,648 students traveling to and from school on town roads, the School Committee will continue to support (pending available funding) both the mandated and optional busing program.
- Join with other towns and the regional business community to request state government support for improving traffic and public transportation.

Goal: Encourage Natick's transition to an environmentally sustainable community.**Board of Selectmen**

- Design Town projects to include environmentally sustainable practices.
- Promote energy conservation, waste reduction and minimal environmental impact within Town government and among residents and businesses.
- Promote alternatives to private car transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle and mass transportation.
- Encourage public awareness of the Town's natural resources.
- Encourage use of Conservation Fund resources to achieve sustainability.

Conservation Commission**Short term**

- Provide residents with information regarding why environmental protection is important at a personal level and proactive steps residents can take to preserve Natick's natural resources.

Long term

- Work to implement new Natick by-laws on tree protection and management, and on the use of pesticides and herbicides for lawn and landscape care.

Finance Committee

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Planning Board

- Preserve and protect our environmental resources:
 - Promote and develop environmentally sustainable zoning and building codes.
 - Continue to promote "smart growth" principles.
 - Promote use of Conservation Trust funds to improve and maintain the walking trail system and/or rail trail.

School Committee

- The School Committee will continue to evaluate opportunities to incorporate environmentally friendly materials and strategies into present and planned school buildings and programs insofar as such materials and strategies are economically feasible and perform at least as well as other options. In part to minimize the emissions caused by Natick's 4,648 students traveling to and from school on town roads, the School Committee will continue to support (pending available funding) both the mandated and optional busing program.
- Ensure that development is completed in a sustainable and environmentally-sensitive way.
- Increase public awareness of and access to the Town's recreational amenities and natural resources.
- Consider green building standards for new construction and renovations of Town buildings; train key Town employees and Building Committee members on standards.
- Monitor Natick's air quality and identify sources of pollutants.

Goal: Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs.

Board of Selectmen

- Ensure that the Community Development Department has adequate resources needed to achieve beneficial development.
- Encourage transportation improvements to attract business.
- Identify and obtain state and federal resources to attract major employer location/expansion.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Planning Board

- Target, dedicate and protect spaces to incubate and expand businesses.
- Encourage planned mixed-use development in Natick Center including residential, affordable residential, retail, office, restaurant, pub and entertainment uses.
- Create alternative zoning options to encouraging new businesses and keep small businesses in Natick Center.

School Committee

- The School Committee will continue to provide schools that maximize each student's overall potential and will be capable of supporting, attracting and retaining businesses in the community.

Goal: Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center.

Board of Selectmen

- Encourage and promote Natick Center development.
- Identify and resolve regulatory and other impediments to investment in Natick Center.
- Continue to explore and promote a viable parking solution to satisfy business, local government and visitor demand.
- Assure that town-wide transportation solutions include Natick Center.
- Advocate for full accessibility of the Natick Center T station and expanded and reliable MBTA service.
- Encourage mixed-use and residential development.
- Integrate Natick Center into the Town's overall Economic Development process.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Planning Board

- Promote more economic activity:
 - Re-write sign By-Law.
 - Promote more parking (*e.g.*, new garage).
 - Promote more housing (further implement the Housing Overlay Option Plan [HOOP]).
 - Work with Natick Labs to create incubator jobs downtown.

School Committee

No action items.

Goal: Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents.

Board of Selectmen

- Maintain Town services that are essential to the broad spectrum of the community, including the libraries, human services, recreation, veterans' services, public health, information resources and educational opportunities for all ages.
- Promote to residents the availability of Town and other cost-relief services such as tax abatements and exemptions.
- Encourage and support Natick's economic diversity.

Conservation Commission

No action items.

Finance Committee

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability for library, social services, etc.

Planning Board

- Promote a Town that is physically accessible to people of all abilities.

School Committee

- Natick School system will continue to evaluate the intellectual, physical, and social needs of its student population within its overall budget and student performance.
- Promote a Town that is physically accessible to people of all abilities.

Conclusion

The *Natick 360* process has been guided by the introductory statement of The Community Vision and Strategic Planning Handbook of the National Civic League,

Some communities allow the future to happen to them. Successful communities recognize the future is something they can create. These communities take the time to produce a vision of the future they desire and employ a process that helps them achieve their goals.

Throughout all of the studies, surveys and workshops conducted as part of the *Natick 360* process, one overarching theme has emerged: the strong attachment and commitment many residents have to the town. Their strongest hope is that the Natick of the future will retain many of the features and characteristics they so value in the Natick of today.

With the development of the *Natick 360 Strategic Plan 2008-2012* Natick has taken an important step in determining its future. Events may make some of the listed goals unachievable or impractical but the strategic planning document, continually reviewed and updated, will provide a guide for action and measures of achievement as Natick's citizens and their government strive to fulfill their vision for the Town.

Acknowledgements

Private Sector Financial Sponsors

The Town of Natick and the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee would like to thank the following businesses for their financial support of the *Natick 360* strategic planning process. Without their support, the *Natick 360 Strategic Plan 2008-2012* would not be possible.

- Ameriprise Financial
- Belkin Family Lookout Farm
- Boston Scientific
- Debsan, My Decorating Store
- Eastern Bank
- Fair & Yeager Insurance Agency, Inc.
- MetroWest Subaru
- Middlesex Savings Bank
- Natick Federal Savings Bank
- Scrub-a-Dub Car Wash
- SustainServ
- WebReply

In addition, the Town of Natick and the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee would like to thank the following businesses for providing refreshments for events that were part of the *Natick 360* strategic planning process, and for developing the www.Natick360.org public web site.

- Bacon Street Farm
- Bakery on the Common
- BJ's Wholesale Club
- Entenmann's Outlet Store
- George's Pizza
- Liberty Pizza
- Natick Pizza
- Pizza Peddler
- Roche Brothers
- Starbucks
- Stop & Shop
- Thread Media, Inc.

Volunteers

Dozens of Natick residents volunteered to help with the various logistics for developing the *Natick 360 Strategic Plan 2008-2012*. They distributed flyers at community events to publicize the public workshops, made signs and badges, registered participants, made and served refreshments, and all the myriad logistical tasks that made it possible to gather all the ideas and opinions of thousands of our Natick neighbors. These dedicated volunteers are too numerous to list here, but the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee thanks them for their selfless service to our community.

Strategic Planning Process Participants

Over ten percent of Natick's households, including nearly 2,000 people, participated directly in this strategic planning process:

- In July 2006, three preliminary focus groups sought input from 21 residents.
- Three business forums, in September and December 2006 and April 2007, brought 20 Natick business leaders into the process.
- The Town's 18 senior staff provided input to the process in two meetings in October 2006 and February 2007.
- More than 150 residents attended the October 2006 Values and Vision Weekend Friday evening event, featuring presentations on Natick's past and present and the "new urbanism" movement.
- More than 325 participated in the October 2006 Values and Vision Workshops on Saturday and Sunday.

- Another nearly 200 people provided written input to the October 2006 Values and Vision Workshops through the *Natick 360* web site.
- About 40 residents overcame February 2007 snows to provide input at public meetings at the Morse Institute Library and the Senior Center.
- More than 30 state and regional leaders attended the Key Informant meeting in February 2007.
- A forum at Natick High School involved 90 Junior and Senior students in March 2007.
- More than 100 Natick photographers submitted works for the “Focus on Natick” contest. Selected photographs were displayed at The Center for the Arts in Natick during May and June 2007.
- More than 100 residents came to the June 2007 Strategic Choices Weekend Friday evening event featuring presentations about State and regional planning activities.
- More than 140 residents participated directly in the July 2007 Strategic Choices Workshops on Saturday and Sunday, and several more provided written input.
- Nearly 1,200 households responded to the July-August 2007 scientific random sample survey.
- The 42 members of the five sponsoring boards and committees met several times to consider *Natick 360* issues in both joint sessions and board and committee meetings over the 1½ years of the initiative. They include the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, Planning Board and School Committee.

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee thanks all the participants for their commitment to making our community a better place to live, work and thrive.

Special Thanks

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee thanks following participants who brought new ideas and spirit to the *Natick 360* strategic planning process:

- Joel Barrera of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council spoke at the October 2006 Values and Vision Weekend Friday evening event.
- Elyssa Conley won the “Focus on Natick” contest for her photograph of a rower on Lake Cochituate (see www.natickart.org/gallery/past/2007-4/present.html).
- Marc Draisen, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, spoke at the June 2007 Strategic Choices Weekend Friday evening event.
- Anthony Flint of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy spoke at the October 2006 Values and Vision Weekend Friday evening event.
- David Lavalley, Executive Director, and The Center for Arts in Natick, who co-sponsored the “Focus on Natick” photography contest with *Natick 360*.
- State Representative David Linsky spoke at both the October 2006 Values and Vision Weekend and the June 2007 Strategic Choices Weekend Friday evening events.
- Doug Rubin, Chief of Staff to Governor Deval Patrick, spoke at the October 2006 Values and Vision Weekend Friday evening event.
- State Senator Karen Spilka spoke at the June 2007 Strategic Choices Weekend Friday evening event.

Strategic Planning Oversight Committee

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee was authorized by Town Meeting in Spring, 2006 (see Appendix F). It is charged with managing the planning process, recommending professional consultants and overseeing their work on the project, engaging the public to participate in the process, and coordinating involvement by the sponsoring boards. The SPOC is only a facilitation committee; final authority for all outcomes rests with the sponsoring boards and with Town Meeting.

Member of the SPOC are:

- Rosemary Driscoll, designated by School Committee, is a market research consultant.
- Teresa Evans, at-large member, is Communications Manager for Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott, a Boston-based architecture, planning and design firm. Ms. Evans serves as a member of the Planning Board, and represents Precinct 7 at Town Meeting. She also represents Natick on the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.
- Matthew Gardner, Ph.D., designated by the Conservation Commission, is Executive Director of the Earth System Initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Gardner serves as Chairman of the Conservation Commission.
- John Heerwagen, at-large member, is Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Middlesex Savings Bank, headquartered in Natick.
- Bill Mayhew, at-large alternate member, is an independent consultant, specializing in the specification, design, and development of computerized information management systems for nonprofit organizations; has been involved with strategic planning for several nonprofit organizations and associations in the Boston area; and has been Technical Product Manager for the Trillium Software division of Harte-Hanks, Inc.
- David Parish, Co-Chair, designated by the Board of Selectmen, is retired from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, where he directed housing and community development programs.
- George Richards, designated by the Planning Board, is an attorney and partner in the Natick law firm of Goguen, McLaughlin, Richards & Mahaney. He is a former member of the Planning Board.
- Andrés Rochwerger, at-large member, is Global Sourcing Manager at Boston Scientific Corp., a medical device company headquartered in Natick.
- Craig Ross, Co-Chair, designated by the Finance Committee, is a partner in Virtual Media Resources, a media research and customer insight consultancy. Mr. Ross is a former member of the Finance Committee, and represents Precinct 4 at Town Meeting.
- Harlee S. Strauss, Ph.D., at-large member, is President of H. Strauss Associates, Inc., a health risk assessment consultancy. Dr. Strauss represents Precinct 7 at Town Meeting.

Consulting Partners

Natick 360 engaged some of the best and most experienced consultants in the country to assist with the initiative.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, of Boston, wrote the Phase 1 report, *Natick Our Community Yesterday and Today*. MAPC is a regional planning agency representing 101 cities and towns in the metropolitan Boston area. Created by an act of the Legislature in 1963, it serves as an independent public body of the Commonwealth within which state and local officials can address issues of regional importance. As one of 14 members of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), MAPC has oversight responsibility for the region's federally funded transportation program. The Council enhances the quality of life and competitive advantage of the Boston metropolitan region in the global economy by providing a focus for action and developing sound responses to issues of regional significance. The consulting term was led by Marc Racicot. For more information see www.mapc.org.

Blackerby Associates, Inc.

Blackerby Associates, of Phoenix, provided project management and facilitation services during the *Natick 360* strategic planning process. Blackerby Associates helps any organization transform into a high-performance enterprise. The firm's principals have extensive experience in strategic planning for the public and not-for-profit sectors. This recent experience includes project management and facilitation of strategic plan development for: Town of Fountain Hills, Arizona; several agencies of the City of Phoenix; Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Augusta; Lower Manhattan Development Authority, New York; Town of Vassalboro, Maine; Petroleum Technology Transfer Council, Houston; and Manufacturing Extension Partnerships in Massachusetts, Florida and New Mexico. The consulting team was led by Phillip Blackerby, Elizabeth Reuthe and Kevin O'Sullivan. For more information see www.BlackerbyAssoc.com.

ETC Institute

ETC Institute, of Olathe, Kansas, conducted the scientific random sample survey of Natick residents. ETC Institute is one of the nation's leading community-based market research firms. It helps corporate, government, and not-for-profit organizations gather and interpret data from the general public and special interest groups about a wide range of issues. ETC Institute was founded in 1982 to help local governments gather data from residents to enhance community planning. ETC Institute has completed research projects for clients in 46 states. These include thousands of surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder meetings. The company is woman-owned and certified as a disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE). The consulting team was led by Chris Tatham. For more information see www.EtcInstitute.com.

Appendices

Following in the Primary Document

- Appendix A. Board of Selectmen Action Plan
- Appendix B. Conservation Commission Action Plan
- Appendix C. Finance Committee Action Plan
- Appendix D. Planning Board Action Plan
- Appendix E. School Committee Action Plan
- Appendix F. Town Meeting Article 15, Spring 2006

Attached Under Separate Tabs

- Appendix G. Natick Our Community Yesterday and Today
- Appendix H. Vision for the Future Weekend Summary of Participant Evaluations
- Appendix I. Natick Values and Vision Statements
- Appendix J. Proceedings of the Key Informants Meeting
- Appendix K. Strategic Choices Weekend Evaluations
- Appendix L. Survey Report

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**Town of Natick Strategic Plan
2008-2012**

**Appendix A.
Board of Selectmen Action Plan**

Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community

- Review, ratify and implement Financial Management Principles.
- Investigate and implement operational efficiencies and cost controls.
- Advocate for increased and sustainable state aid.
- Investigate and advocate for sources of revenue other than property taxes.
- Refine and monitor the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Identify future liabilities that will affect our operating budget.
- Regularly evaluate the level of local government services that Natick taxpayers will support.

Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees

- Ensure that the Town communicates with the public through newsletters, web, email, TV, press or other means.
- Provide town volunteers and employees with accurate information about Open Meeting, Public Records and Ethics regulations.
- Communicate about opportunities to serve in Town Government.
- Continue to enhance accessibility of local officials.
- Continue to promote voter participation in local elections.

Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change

- Evaluate the current public safety staffing and costs and recommend modifications as appropriate.
- Continue to promote training and leadership development within public safety departments.
- Ensure that development mitigation addresses public safety needs.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative service delivery models.

Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community

- Ensure that the Community Development Department has adequate resources needed to achieve beneficial development.
- Promote the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- Implement the Housing Plan to maximize residential housing options for the entire community.
- Investigate and promote zoning changes to maintain and encourage housing diversity and affordability.
- Coordinate housing development with transportation improvements.

Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability

- Maintain regular communication and coordination between the Selectmen and the School Committee.
- Advocate for fair and sustainable levels of state funding to support Natick's Public Schools.
- Pursue state and local support for a replacement or renovation of Natick High School.
- Ensure that school infrastructure and building projects are incorporated into the Town's capital plan.
- Pursue partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to promote educational opportunities and alternative revenue.

Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects

- Refine and monitor the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Develop and communicate to the community plans for major initiatives, including project descriptions, timetables, funding options and the decision process for projects such as: the High School, Senior Center, West Natick Fire Station, Rail Trail, school expansion/renovation projects, public works infrastructure and transportation projects.
- Obtain appropriate mitigation funding from future development.
- Work with the legislative delegation and state/federal agencies to obtain funding for all eligible projects.

Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements

- Ensure that the Capital Improvement Plan properly addresses the need to maintain the Town's infrastructure.
- Advocate for increased state and federal funding for roadway repair.
- Maintain the Town's infrastructure for long-term benefit.

Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town

- Maximize use of the Regional Transit Authority to fund public transportation within and beyond Natick.
- Ensure that the RIDE service is adequately funded; advocate for full accessibility of the Natick Center T station and mobility for all members of the community, including Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) compliance for all town transportation systems and infrastructure.
- Promote alternatives to private car transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle and mass transportation.
- Ensure that Natick's major transportation initiatives are represented in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process, including Route 27, and the intersections of Routes 9/27 and Route 9/Oak.
- Participate in regional solutions to regional transportation problems.
- Leverage development for roadway improvement projects.
- Encourage expansion and reliability of MBTA service.
- Obtain appropriate development mitigation for roadway improvement projects.

Encourage Natick's transition to an environmentally sustainable community

- Design Town projects to include environmentally sustainable practices.
- Promote energy conservation, waste reduction and minimal environmental impact within Town government and among residents and businesses.
- Promote alternatives to private car transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle and mass transportation.
- Encourage public awareness of the Town's natural resources.
- Encourage use of Conservation Fund resources to achieve sustainability.

Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs

- Ensure that the Community Development Department has adequate resources needed to achieve beneficial development.
- Encourage transportation improvements to attract business.
- Identify and obtain state and federal resources to attract major employer location/expansion.

Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center

- Encourage and promote Natick Center development.
- Identify and resolve regulatory and other impediments to investment in Natick Center.
- Continue to explore and promote a viable parking solution to satisfy business, local government and visitor demand.
- Assure that town-wide transportation solutions include Natick Center.
- Advocate for full accessibility of the Natick Center T station and expanded and reliable MBTA service.
- Encourage mixed-use and residential development.
- Integrate Natick Center into the Town's overall Economic Development process.

Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents

- Maintain Town services that are essential to the broad spectrum of the community, including the libraries, human services, recreation, veterans' services, public health, information resources and educational opportunities for all ages.
- Promote to residents the availability of Town and other cost-relief services such as tax abatements and exemptions.
- Encourage and support Natick's economic diversity.

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**Town of Natick Strategic Plan
2008-2012**

**Appendix B.
Conservation Commission Action Plan**

Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community

No action items.

Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees

Short term

- Publish a brochure that describes the role of the Conservation Commission, the laws relevant to Natick Citizens, and ways to protect Natick's natural resources.

Medium term

- Publish 2 times per year a newsletter to the community that discusses ongoing issues of importance to the community.

Long term

- Make better use of cable TV and press releases to inform the public of Conservation Commission activities and issues.

Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change

No action items.

Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community

Long term

- The Conservation Commission will work with the Town DPW to identify areas where septic/cess pool systems are leaking, and where targeted investment in sewer connections would have a beneficial impact on natural resources.

Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability

No action items.

Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects

No action items.

Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements

No action items.

Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town

No action items.

Encourage Natick's transition to an environmentally sustainable community

Short term

- Provide residents with information regarding why environmental protection is important at a personal level and proactive steps residents can take to preserve Natick's natural resources.

Long term

- Work to implement new Natick by-laws on tree protection and management, and on the use of pesticides and herbicides for lawn and landscape care.

Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs

No action items.

Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center

No action items.

Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents

No action items.

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**Town of Natick Strategic Plan
2008-2012**

**Appendix C.
Finance Committee Action Plan**

Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community

Short term

- Review what is put forth to optimize and enhance revenue sources; ensure that appropriate revenue sources and projected expenses have been considered; administration/proponent decisions are based on sound financial principles; critically review all revenues and requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Review what is put forth to manage expenses; appropriate revenue sources and projected expenses have been considered; administration/proponent decisions are based on sound financial principles.
- Review what is put forth to where possible, improve operational efficiency; ensure that operation efficiencies have been maximized.

Long term

- Review what is put forth to encourage well-planned economic development.
- Review what is put forth to show all revenues and expenditures, including grants and non-appropriated revenues as long as the town makes clear these are off budget and not impacting the taxpayer yet enhancing services.

Timeframe not identified

- Incorporate three-year revenue and expense forecasts into the annual budget.
- Collaborate with administration to allocate all unallocated departmental expenses (i.e., benefits, insurance, retirement contributions, energy, etc.) in order to get a true understanding of the town's costs on a department and/or program level.
- Encourage the administration to provide complete and accurate information in a timely manner to allow Finance Committee members adequate time for review.
- Facilitate effective communication between town entities and residents through the timely posting of Finance Committee materials and information on website and at the Morse Institute Library and Bacon Library.

Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees

Short term

- Maintain and develop effective communication channels between the Town and its Citizens (the Finance Committee could have a letter on the town website on our role and how we follow the charter and bylaws for our practices).
- Encourage broad public participation in civic affairs (by providing public information on television if we have an opening in the committee and how to apply).

Timeframe not identified

- Improve communication and cooperation among Town departments, boards and committees
- Publish and distribute a simplified budget report, providing residents with clear and readable information about: the relationships between services and taxes; how revenues are spent; limits on discretionary spending; cost of public services and capital outlays; state aid; impact mitigation funds; revenue alternatives; changes in revenues and expenses over time.
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change

Short term

- Evaluate the studies requested by other bodies regarding ongoing needs of relevant departments such as Police, Fire, Emergency Medical, Board of Health, Inspection Services, etc.

Timeframe not identified

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Participate in building studies.

Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community

Short term

- Evaluate these plans per charter as they become a warrant article.

Timeframe not identified

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in community/senior center construction project, as appropriate.

Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability

- Work with School Administration to improve and enhance the presentation of budget information to the public.
- Work with School Administration to identify and include all revenues sources and expenditures in the budget presentation.
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in high school construction/renovation project(s), as appropriate.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Participate in building studies.

Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects

- Review the five-year capital plan and Town-wide priorities.
- Participate in improving the capital planning and budgeting process.
- Review the Town's capital budget.
- Work with Town and School Administration to clarify the presentation of the Capital Plan
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in extraordinary capital project(s), as appropriate.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.
- Participate in building studies.

Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements

- Review the five-year capital plan and Town-wide priorities.
- Participate in improving the capital planning and budgeting process.
- Review the Town's capital budget.
- Work with Town and School Administration to clarify the presentation of the Capital Plan.
- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Represent Finance Committee interests in extraordinary capital project(s), as appropriate.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability.

Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Encourage Natick's transition to an environmentally sustainable community

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.

Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents

- Review budgetary and warrant article submissions to ensure consistency with town goals and objectives.
- Critically review all requested expenditures for need and affordability for library, social services, etc.

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**Town of Natick Strategic Plan
2008-2012**

**Appendix D.
Planning Board Action Plan**

Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community

- Plan for expanded economic development downtown and in commercial and industrial districts.

Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees

- Televised all meetings on Pegasus.
- More joint meetings with Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission and Design Review Board.
- Have minutes approved regularly and posted on-line upon approval.

Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change

- Ensure public safety is adequately addressed in all developments.
- Explore regional solutions.

Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community

- Encourage development in Natick Center.
- Increase capacity and resources as follows:
 - Adequately staff the Community Development department.
- Work more closely with private sector (public/private partnership).
- Review Floor Area Ratio (density) By-Law to assess affect on future development.
- Increase Affordable Housing Stock to address Chapter 40B.
- Utilize Affordable Housing Trust.
- Consider inclusionary zoning by-law.
- Implement and maintain housing plan.

Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability

No action items

Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects

- More Planning Board involvement with new senior/community center.
- More Planning Board involvement with downtown parking garage(s).
- Encourage more Planning Board involvement in reviewing site plans for all major Town capital projects (specifically including the proposed new High School and Senior/Community Center) to ensure adequate parking, landscaping, traffic flows, visual impacts, etc.

Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements

- Optimize Use and Efficiencies of Town Buildings.
- Promote existing and new buildings to be more multi-use.

Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town

- Improve the efficiency of roadways:
 - Adequately address transportation options in all developments.
 - Continue to work proactively with State on intersections at Routes 9/27 and Route 9/Oak.
 - Continue to work on regional solutions.

Encourage Natick's transition to an environmentally sustainable community

- Preserve and protect our environmental resources:
 - Promote and develop environmentally sustainable zoning and building codes.
 - Continue to promote "smart growth" principles.
 - Promote use of Conservation Trust funds to improve and maintain the walking trail system and/or rail trail.

Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs

- Target, dedicate and protect spaces to incubate and expand businesses.
- Encourage planned mixed-use development in Natick Center including residential, affordable residential, retail, office, restaurant, pub and entertainment uses.
- Create alternative zoning options to encouraging new businesses and keep small businesses in Natick Center.

Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center

- Promote more economic activity:
 - Re-write sign By-Law.
 - Promote more parking (e.g., new garage).
 - Promote more housing (further implement the Housing Overlay Option Plan [HOOP]).
 - Work with Natick Labs to create incubator jobs downtown.

Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents

- Promote a Town that is physically accessible to people of all abilities.

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**Town of Natick Strategic Plan
2008-2012**

**Appendix E.
School Committee Action Plan**

Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community

- Natick Public Schools, in its annual budget review, will continue to evaluate the operational efficiency of the services required and desired by the community, and continue to place the needs of the students first.
- Continue to optimize and enhance revenue sources.
- Where possible, improve operational efficiency.
- Continue to incorporate three-year revenue and expense forecasts into the annual budget
- Link changes in the budget to changes in outcome-based performance measures, where appropriate.
- Review all Town services for potential costs and benefits of outsourcing or privatization.
- Continue to request the State Government allocate more funds for aid to education.

Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees

- Under the leadership of our new Superintendent of Schools, the School Committee will evaluate new approaches when appropriate to improve public awareness of the Natick Public Schools. This includes promoting awareness of school activities, student achievement, district initiatives, and budgetary matters. There will be a continuous focus on this objective in each year and with each school-based initiative.
- Maintain and develop effective communication channels between the Town and its Citizens.
- Improve communication and cooperation among Town departments, boards and committees.
- Involve the community in the schools' successes.
- Define, identify and periodically provide updates to the community about school performance and school assets; for example: establish and distribute to parents and the community the district-wide plan for integrating curriculum, assessment and professional development; refine and publish elementary and middle school curriculum maps that delineate skills taught in every subject area during the school year.
- Expand communications between the schools and broader Natick community, through newsletters, email, website, cable access TV and other media, to celebrate school accomplishments, demonstrate the value of schools to Natick, identify ways residents can contribute to schools' success, and increase community participation in school activities.
- Increase use of Natick Town TV (Pegasus), including interviews, discussions of local issues, and educational programs about how Town government works.

Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees (Continued)

- Encourage residents and members of the business community to participate in Town boards, committees and projects.
- Improve board and committee practices, such as: improving communications; scheduling regular cross-board and committee meetings; adopting ways for residents to participate electronically; supporting changes in open meeting law to accommodate on-line participation.
- Publish and distribute a simplified budget report, providing residents with clear and readable information about: the relationships between services and taxes; how revenues are spent; limits on discretionary spending; cost of public services and capital outlays; state aid; impact mitigation funds; revenue alternatives; changes in revenues and expenses over time.

Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change

- The School Committee will continue to ensure that the Superintendent of Schools and administration, in collaboration when appropriate with Natick's public safety departments, optimize school security, safety, and evacuation plans.
- Evaluate the ongoing needs of relevant departments such as Police, Fire, Emergency Medical, Board of Health, Inspection Services, etc.

Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community

- The School Committee will continue to ensure that the Superintendent of Schools evaluates and projects student enrollment as compared to school capacity. This evaluation will continue to incorporate consideration of expected population growth and change in connection with new housing developments, and will be conducted, when appropriate, in collaboration with the Director of Community Development. Results will continue to be discussed at least annually in public meetings.

Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability

- The School Committee will continue to evaluate and support optimization of the services currently rendered to and needed by students, both mandated and non-mandated. We will evaluate and, when appropriate, support the implementation of new initiatives and approaches for improving educational quality, opportunities, and outcomes that may be proposed by the new incoming Superintendent of Schools.
- Ensure that Natick education programs are among the best.
- Ensure that Natick schools infrastructure is among the best.
- Ensure that Natick education programs and facilities are integrated into the community
- Build a new replacement Natick High School.
- Upgrade infrastructure of all Natick schools to meet educational goals.
- Given current student population, reduce student/teacher ratio where beneficial within constraints of current facilities by adding support staff and/or teacher assistants.
- Given current student population, reduce student/teacher ratio where beneficial by adding teachers and classrooms as necessary.
- Attract and retain qualified teachers and administrators by offering salaries, benefits, and ongoing professional development at levels competitive with surrounding communities.
- Re-engineer core subject areas where necessary to ensure they are taught in a rigorous, challenging way. Costs might include new textbooks, additional staffing, curriculum, or professional development.
- Expand curriculum offerings. For example, offer foreign language in elementary school, offer more languages in middle schools and high school; add orchestra, music theory, engineering, additional business courses, etc.
- Improve educational outcomes by offering supplemental e-learning opportunities, including in professional development.
- Explore ways in which local and regional institutions, businesses and community members can mentor, tutor, conduct seminars or provide other expanded or enhanced educational services or offerings.
- Hire a grants coordinator to maximize outside funding sought by Natick Public Schools.

Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects

- The School Committee and Superintendent of Schools will continue, as appropriate, to collaborate and communicate with applicable town boards and the Town Administrator regarding the Natick Public Schools' three-year capital project plan and any known capital risks so that the town can appropriately plan for managing extraordinary capital projects/requirements.
- Build a new replacement Natick High School.
- Upgrade infrastructure of all Natick schools to meet educational goals.
- Build a new high school appropriate for modern curriculum and technology.
- Build a new high school appropriate for modern curriculum and technology, using green building design and materials.
- Build a new high school appropriate for modern curriculum and technology, using green building design and materials, and including facilities appropriate for dual-use by students and town residents.

Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects (Continued)

- Improve the capital planning and budgeting process.
- Update the Town's capital budget.

Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements

- The School Committee will ensure that the school department continues to maintain (on a rolling basis) and evaluate its three-year capital plan. The Committee will continue to review the capital plan annually as of part of the overall budget strategy review. The finalized plan will be distributed to all other applicable boards and the Town Administrator or designee.
- Evaluate the Town's needs for maintenance and improvement of public facilities and infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, water and sewer, buildings, and schools, etc.
- Establish and keep to a regular capital investment schedule to keep the building in good condition and able to provide an appropriate learning environment. Over the next five years improvements may be needed at Kennedy Middle School, Memorial School, and Johnson School.
- Update the five-year capital plan and Town-wide priorities.

Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town

- In part to minimize the traffic impact of Natick's 4,648 students traveling to and from school on town roads, the School Committee will continue to support (pending available funding) both the mandated and optional busing program.
- Join with other towns and the regional business community to request state government support for improving traffic and public transportation.

Encourage Natick's transition to an environmentally sustainable community;

- The School Committee will continue to evaluate opportunities to incorporate environmentally friendly materials and strategies into present and planned school buildings and programs insofar as such materials and strategies are economically feasible and perform at least as well as other options. In part to minimize the emissions caused by Natick's 4,648 students traveling to and from school on town roads, the School Committee will continue to support (pending available funding) both the mandated and optional busing program.
- Ensure that development is completed in a sustainable and environmentally-sensitive way.
- Increase public awareness of and access to the Town's recreational amenities and natural resources.
- Consider green building standards for new construction and renovations of Town buildings; train key Town employees and Building Committee members on standards.
- Monitor Natick's air quality and identify sources of pollutants.

Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs

- The School Committee will continue to provide schools that maximize each student's overall potential and will be capable of supporting, attracting and retaining businesses in the community.

Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center

No action items.

Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents

- Natick School system will continue to evaluate the intellectual, physical, and social needs of its student population within its overall budget and student performance.
- Promote a Town that is physically accessible to people of all abilities.

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



**Town of Natick Strategic Plan
2008-2012**

**Appendix F.
Town Meeting Article 15, May 2, 2006**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and raise, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money as may be required to execute a Long Range Strategic Planning process for the Town of Natick, or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-3-0 on April 4, 2006, the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 15, and that the sum of \$150,000.00 be appropriated as indicated below:

The purpose of this article is to provide funding for the execution of a Long Range Strategic Planning for the Town. The Long Range Strategic Planning Study Committee presented a comprehensive overview of the prospective Long Range Strategic Planning initiative. After lengthy debate by Finance Committee members over three public meetings, the Finance Committee supported the funding request of \$150,000.00. The funding sources are as follows:

Tax Levy	\$ 75,000.00
Free Cash	<u>\$ 75,000.00</u>
<i>Total</i>	<u><i>\$150,000.00</i></u>

* * *

There was a great deal of questions and debate on the subject matter of Article 15.

A motion was made by Arthur Lamont, seconded by Mary Brown, to refer the subject matter of Article 15 to the Board of Selectmen.

REFERRAL LOSES.

Motion:

VOTED BY MAJORITY, to appropriate the sum of \$150,000 for the purpose of executing a Long Range Strategic Planning process for the Town of Natick said amount to be expended under the direction of the Board of Selectmen, the School Committee and the Planning Board.

And that the sum of \$150,000 be raised from the following sources:

Tax Levy of Fiscal Year 2007	\$75,000
Free Cash	75,000